

IN FABRIC

A Ghost Story

by

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PINK REVISIONS

Fully Collated

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1

CREDITS

1

Music: Credits in CAPS against the milky red background of photographic paper, (filling the screen) in a darkroom. A smiling face gradually appears through the sheen of photographic paper. The image of a middle-aged woman modelling a red dress with a dark pattern on the abdomen for a department store catalogue slowly comes to life as the camera circles around her image again and again. As the credits continue, more images come to life (through a kaleidoscope) of other women modelling dresses and underwear for the same department store catalogue. The smiles of joy and innocence seem at odds with the melancholy music and the sense of voyeurism. The final image is a detail of a frantic sewing machine, which freezes to allow for the film's title: IN FABRIC.

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INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S TRUSTED DEPARTMENT STORE. DAWN.

2

A box of garments is savagely slashed open with a gleaming knife. The sticky tape on the box is noisily ripped off. The action abruptly intrudes upon the credits and cuts right through the music.

In a British town known as Thames Valley-on-Thames, staff are working at the crack of dawn in a department store. It's the first day of the January sales and shop staff prepare for opening hours by hanging blouses, dresses, hats, hosiery and underwear in the Ladies' Fashion Boutique section of Dentley & Soper's Trusted Department Store. Detailed shots follow of garish blouses, blazers, tasteful knitwear and hats. Curious cabinets are stuffed with textiles and sewing wool. The piping of a money chute runs across the wall behind the counter. Dentley & Soper's dates back to the early 20th century and has been refurbished with 1970s panelling, carpets, etc. Dresses and discount signs are placed on mannequins. An ornate box pops up through the dispatch chute and the head member of staff, Miss Luckmore opens it and takes out the same red dress with a dark pattern that featured in the opening credits. Miss Luckmore caresses the dress and carefully puts it on another mannequin known as 'Reading'. Her colleagues, Miss Fatherson, Miss Brimblecombe and Miss Lulworth mercilessly cut down Christmas decorations and stuff them in the chute.

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3

EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAWN.

3

A crowd forms outside and people are already starting to push and shove.

4

INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAWN.

4

The crowd can be heard cheering outside and a bell warns of impending opening hours.

Miss Luckmore looks out the window and in the darkness of winter dawn, she can make out the long line of shoppers.

Mr Lundy, the silver-haired store manager supervises the preparations for opening hours. The red dress with the dark pattern has fallen off the mannequin. Miss Luckmore puts it back on.

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Another box of garments comes up through the dispatch chute. A woman picks up the box from the chute and places an empty box on it to be taken down. As she presses a button, the chute drops suddenly. The warning bell for opening hours rings once more.

The staff quickly move into their greeting freeze. A final bell indicates the shop is now open. The dim lights are superseded by the fluorescent flicker of full tube lighting. The doorman unlocks the front door and the crowd enter. The image freezes as hordes of people rush in and an ominous synth drone replaces natural sound.

5 NEWSPAPER CLOSE-UP - INTERCUT WITH CHANGING ROOM AND SEWING ROOM 5

The same image appears in black & white in a local newspaper with a headline about the first day of the sales followed by a succession of other grainy black & white images of intense shopping and printed sales adverts. A radio report features various shoppers discussing their purchases. The final image is of the Lonely Hearts section. An advert reads;

HAPPY, ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 50s, LOOKING FOR TENDER, RELIABLE GENT TO GO ON LONG WALKS WITH AND MORE. LAUGHTER NEEDED. BOX No 6832

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6 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK. DAY.

6

A series of female cashiers sit behind glass booths waiting for the first customers of the day. Each woman roughly fits the description of the advert. The third seat is empty, but a tearful SHEILA (who wrote the Lonely Hearts ad) can be seen in the background being consoled by a colleague. Part of a man's body enters the frame, waiting to be served and Sheila quickly wipes her tears and returns to the booth putting on her best smile. A wanted poster of a bank robber lies next to the booth. The bank managers, Clive and Stash can be seen telling the other woman to return to her desk.

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SHEILA (SPEAKING INTO A MIC)
Good morning, sir. Welcome to
Waingel's Bank, my name is Sheila.
How may I help you?

7 INT. SHEILA'S CAR. NIGHT.

7

A local reporter on the car radio interviews shoppers about the goods they purchased in the sales.

Sheila stares into thin air as she drives home. The journey home is fraught with tailgaters and oncoming cars with lights on full beam.

7B INT.DENTLEY AND SOPER'S.NIGHT 7B

A succession of still photos of women shopping and browsing.

8 INT. SHEILA'S STAIRWELL. NIGHT. 8

The phone rings. Sheila, still in her bank uniform with the 'I'll Help You' badge, enters and picks up the phone. A framed photo on the wall shows Sheila with her former husband Max and son, Vince during happier days.

SHEILA
01632 960786?

MAX - SHEILA'S EX-HUSBAND (OFF-SCREEN)
Alright?

SHEILA (COLD)
Yeah, alright. You?

MAX (OFF-SCREEN)
Alright.

SHEILA (TO THE POINT)
You want me to get Vince?

MAX (OFF-SCREEN)
Er, yeah..

Sheila calls her teenage son, Vince who is in his bedroom.

SHEILA
Vince! Vince! Telephone!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)
That Gwen?

SHEILA
No! Your dad!

Sheila's tall, lanky and surly teenage son makes his way downstairs and takes the phone. She waits for him to say something and he waits for her to go. Sheila takes the hint and exits.

9 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT. 9

As Sheila lays the table, she hears Vince laughing. A soap opera called 'The Boyhood Adventures of Slavo Saxon' is on the television.

10 INT. SHEILA'S STAIRWELL. NIGHT. 10

Sheila enters.

SHEILA

Five minutes and I start without
you.

Vince gives his mum a dirty look as she exits.

VINCE (TO MAX)

Yep, nothing's changed here.

11 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT. 11

Sheila returns to the table and opens the letter, only to find a Neo-classical style painting of a Lonely Heart candidate naked on horseback at the top of a mountain pointing at the sunset. The letter is practically a manuscript and Sheila begins to read. The soap opera ends followed by a local advert for DENTLEY & SOPER'S TRUSTED DEPARTMENT STORE, which distracts Sheila from the letter. The advert uses a looping, hypnotic synth coda with flashing still images of the different departments featuring customers and staff in different poses interjected with percentage signs for the discounts on offer. The lack of a voice-over or moving images adds to the intensity of the advert as stills of women modelling dresses repeat again and again. Vince returns, but only to grab a coat. *

SHEILA

What are you doing?

VINCE

Going round dad's.

SHEILA

What about your supper?

VINCE

What supper? You didn't tell me
anything.

SHEILA

Don't give me that, of course you
knew! What else do I do every
night?

VINCE

Put it in the fridge. I can have it
tomorrow.

SHEILA

Vince, you're pushing me to the
edge, you know that? Eat your
dinner, then you can go to dad's.

VINCE
Leave it out, mum.

SHEILA
What are you going to eat?

VINCE
Stacy's making a curry.

SHEILA
Who's Stacy?

VINCE
His new bird.

Sheila is in shock.

VINCE (CONT'D)
He didn't tell you?

12 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 12

Sheila peeks out of her curtains as Vince leaves the house.

She sits down and goes through the Lonely Hearts column. One advert reads: FUN, DYNAMIC, TALL, HANDSOME MAN 50s LOVES LAUGHING, COOKING, DANCING. LOOKING FOR AFFECTION FROM WOMAN, SIMILAR AGE, PHOTO PLEASE. BOX No. 1592.

13 SCENE DELETED 13

14 SCENE DELETED 14

15 INT. PHOTO BOOTH. DAY. 15

Sheila adjusts her hair and adopts a look for the camera. She puts coins into the slot and nervously waits for her photo to be taken. She stares at the camera and each time the warning light comes on she manages to smile.

16 PHOTO STRIP 16

A photo strip gradually transforms from white into four black & white portraits of Sheila. Her eyes are half-closed in two of them, but she looks good in the others.

16B INT. WAINGEL'S BANK. DAY. 16B

One of Sheila's photos is cut off with a pair of scissors. Her managers, Clive and Stash are being shouted at by their boss, Pete Mathinson.

17 EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 17

Sheila runs in the rain to make it to Dentley & Soper's on time, but Pitcroft, the doorman, closes the door on her. As Sheila walks on she notices Miss Luckmore changing a mannequin in the window display.

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18 INT. SHEILA'S HALL/LOUNGE. NIGHT. 18

A soaked Sheila enters.

SHEILA
Pelting it out there!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)
Thought you'd be back at six!

SHEILA
Long queue at the post office.
You'd think it'd be empty after
Christmas!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)
Starving!

Sheila takes off her coat and walks towards the lounge.

SHEILA
Forgot already what you were
banging on about last night? Fridge
dinners and all that or have you
gone off the idea of stale ..

Sheila trips over what she thinks are Vince's shoes in the middle of the hallway.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Can you not leave your shoes in the
middle of the ..

Sheila is taken aback by the presence of Gwen, Vince's much older girlfriend (in her late thirties) sitting in the lounge and modelling for a drawing. She turns round, realising that she tripped over Gwen's shoes, not Vince's.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Ooh, sorry, I didn't know you had
company.
(to Gwen)
How's it going?

Gwen is posing for Vince with her eyes closed and ignores Sheila

VINCE
She's modelling.

SHEILA (SLIGHTLY SARCASTIC)
Pardon me, then. So I'm cooking for three, am I?
Gwen? Vince? Anyone?

VINCE
I suppose so.

SHEILA
Have you offered her anything?

VINCE
We only just started.

SHEILA
Would you like a drink, Gwen?

Gwen ignores Sheila again.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Let's have a look.

Sheila peers at Vince's drawing.

SHEILA (CUTTING) (CONT'D)
Very good. He's made you look lovely, Gwen.

Gwen can't help opening her eyes, but doesn't respond to the provocation.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
Wish I had that talent.

19 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 19

Sheila is going through her wardrobe in anticipation of a date. The only decent outfit has been damaged by moths. Gwen's moaning and French whispering can be heard from the next room.

20 INT. OUTSIDE VINCE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 20

Sheila creeps out and looks through Vince's keyhole. Gwen reclines on an armchair under a lamp with a naked Vince on the floor eating her out. He gropes her backside with one hand and fondles himself with the other. Gwen arches her head back, moaning in ecstasy, as Vince thrusts his head into her. She pulls him in further with one leg clasped around the back of his head.

As Gwen opens her eyes, she looks straight ahead as if she noticed Sheila's presence. Sheila can't work out if Gwen is vacantly staring ahead or has noticed her presence. Gwen's stare feels alarmingly precise and direct. She toys with the lamp cord and just before she comes she emphatically switches it off. A languid orgasmic shriek leaves nothing to the imagination despite the complete darkness. Sheila quickly moves away from the keyhole and retreats to her room.

21 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 21

Sheila returns to her room and finds the Dentley & Soper's catalogue looking strangely ominous on her bedside table. She picks it up, leafs through it and loses herself in the images.

21B SCENE DELETED 21B *

21C EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 21C

ZOOM-OUT from the lens, which appears to be hidden inside a vortex that features as part of the mannequin window display. Store staff are removing more Christmas decorations from the display.

22 SCENE DELETED 22

23 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK. DAY. 23

Sheila sits behind the thick pane of glass waiting for a customer whilst Clive and Stash remove Christmas decorations.

24 INT. SHEILA'S HOME. DAY. 24

The phone rings and goes into answerphone mode.

SHEILA ON ANSWERPHONE

You've reached 01632 960786. I'm not in right now, but if you leave a message, I'll get straight back to you.

ADONIS (OFF-SCREEN)

This is a message for Sheila. It's Adonis. Box number 1592.

25 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK. DAY. 25

The answerphone message continues. Clive climbs up on the counter in front of Sheila to remove Christmas lights and tinsel from above her glass booth. His crotch is level with Sheila's face behind the booth as he removes the tinsel from above. Sheila looks annoyed at the inappropriate positioning, and hopes that a customer will soon appear to break the embarrassment. *

ADONIS (OFF-SCREEN)

I got your letter.. and the photo. I've got a few other dates this week, but give me a call and I'll see if I can slot you in. Give us a call back when you get a moment. My number is 01632 960322. *

26 INT. SHEILA'S HOME. DAY. 26

Sheila is back home after work and plays the message again.

ADONIS (OFF-SCREEN)

This is a message for Sheila. It's Adonis. Box number 1592. I got your letter.. and the photo. I've got a few other dates ..

The message is suddenly interrupted by the phone ringing, which makes Sheila jump.

SHEILA

01632 960786?

OPERATOR (OFF-SCREEN)
Hello, it's your operator calling.
I have a caller requesting I
reverse the charges. Are you happy
to accept the call?

SHEILA (GRUDGINGLY)
OK.

OPERATOR (OFF-SCREEN)
Thank you, just putting them
through.

SHEILA
01632 960786?

GWEN (OFF-SCREEN)
Hello, is Vince there please?

SHEILA (FUMING)
Just a moment.

27 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT.

27

Sheila finds Vince vacuuming pine needles from the Christmas tree.

SHEILA
For you.

VINCE
Who is it?

SHEILA
Her royal highness.

As Vince fetches the phone, Sheila tiptoes over to the door in the hope of eavesdropping on the conversation, only Vince is canny enough to speak to Gwen in French. Upon hearing the French conversation and saucy giggling, Sheila gives up and starts the vacuum cleaner.

28 INT. HAIR SALON. DAY.

28

Sheila rests her head back in a wash basin as a woman's hands slowly lather up her hair with shampoo. *

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN) *

What's his name?

SHEILA
Adonis.

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN) *

How's Vince taking it?

SHEILA

I haven't told him yet. If it turns into something, I'll bring it up.

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN)

Of course it'll turn into something. A gorgeous woman like you?

SHEILA

It's OK, you don't have to.

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN)

Come on, I mean it. I'm so glad you're getting out there again, love. It's about time. You deserve so much better than that Max.

SHEILA

It's OK.

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN)

I saw him at Dentley & Soper's with his new woman the other day. Young enough to be his daughter. Really bad taste in shoes too. These silver, tacky things.

Sheila ignores the hairdresser.

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN)(CONT'D)

Next time I see him I'll knee him in the balls.

SHEILA

It's OK, Ange. Let's change the subject.

HAIRDRESSER (OFF-SCREEN)

I mean it, Sheila. I'll take that bastard on. I'll knee him in the balls.

29

INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAY.

29

Sheila browses through the clothing at the Ladies' Fashion Boutique at Dentley & Soper's. A gentle waft of Muzak runs through the store. The mysterious Miss Luckmore is watching Sheila to see if she needs any help. Despite her English name, Miss Luckmore is exotically dark and speaks with a foreign accent.

MISS LUCKMORE

A purchase on the horizon, a panoply of temptation. Can a curious soul desist?

SHEILA

I'm just looking, thank you.

MISS LUCKMORE

The hesitation in your voice soon to be an echo in the recesses of the spheres of retail, I assure you. A fascination of range in delight, capture and seduction.

SHEILA (AWKWARD)

Thank you.

Sheila notices the red dress from the catalogue on the sinister looking mannequin. The only distinctive aspect of the dress is the dark streak of a pattern on the abdomen. Sheila can feel Miss Luckmore looking at her.

*

*

MISS LUCKMORE

Imagine; sixty percent vanished from this sensational garment.

Sheila considers.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

In apprehensions lie the crevices of clarity, foremost through your purse that weighs potential.

SHEILA

Isn't it a little risqué?

MISS LUCKMORE

A provocation; for what else must one wear?

SHEILA

I'm just going on a date.

MISS LUCKMORE (LAUGHING)

A date? Well ..

Miss Luckmore's response indicates that Sheila shouldn't hold back.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

And what kind of date?

Sheila doesn't quite know what Miss Luckmore means.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

Food and drinks?

SHEILA

Food and drinks, yes.

MISS LUCKMORE

An embellishment of occasion for instance, but also the emphasis of comfort and pleasure. Thus, you will destroy two birds with a stone.

30 INT. CHANGING ROOM. DAY.

30

Sheila tries the dress on. The shop Muzak gradually shapeshifts into a strange, unearthly drone. The lighting within the changing room starts to glimmer as if a magical transformation were occurring. Sheila looks at herself in the mirror with the dress on and clearly senses that something has altered. Miss Luckmore spies on Sheila through a peephole.

31 INT. LADIES' DEPARTMENT. DAY.

31

Glowing with a newfound confidence, Sheila comes out in the dress. Miss Luckmore gasps when she sees her.

MISS LUCKMORE

Imagine; the dress is your image and from me onto what you project through an illusion. One sensation of mind, one fabric in recollection of touch.

Sheila offers a disbelieving guffaw.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

But this is how I see your night romance. I predict the fantasy.

SHEILA

Isn't it small? What size is this?

MISS LUCKMORE

Thirty-six.

SHEILA

But I'm not a thirty-six. Far from it.

MISS LUCKMORE

In a number is only the equation of actuality. Dimensions and proportions transcend the prisms of our measurements.

SHEILA

You won't be getting anymore in?

Miss Luckmore shakes her head.

SHEILA (CONT'D)
It's not too small?

Miss Luckmore adjusts the shoulder slightly.

MISS LUCKMORE
There. The expression. Now you will
reflect yourself.

Miss Luckmore positions Sheila in front of another mirror on a wall column. Despite the sense of elation, an immense sadness seeps through. Sheila is clearly damaged and vulnerable and Miss Luckmore reveals an inner sadness behind the smiles and optimism. The melancholic Muzak only enhances the depressive air.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)
There's a lucky man somewhere in
the vista of this mysterious
mirror..
May I ask his name?

SHEILA
His name is Adonis.

MISS LUCKMORE
Adonis. I see him. I like him.

Sheila smiles with uncertainty no matter how much she wants to believe it. She points to her hips where the dress clings the most.

SHEILA
It doesn't cling too tightly here?

MISS LUCKMORE
Desist warning attention to the
askew perception of self. Lightest
trivia and the local vectors of
frivolity are the topics Adonis
will be discussing tonight.

Sheila continues to gaze disbelievingly at herself. Normally regarding herself as plain, she suddenly feels a sense of dizziness from the dress and Miss Luckmore flanks her, buoying her with what feels like genuine flattery.

SHEILA
I don't normally wear this kind of
thing.

MISS LUCKMORE
Darings eclipse the dark
circumference of caution. Be bold.
Your date will compliment you.

LATER, As Miss Luckmore wraps the dress Sheila notices a discreet Latin inscription on the inside by the underlayer, which reads 'Tu Qui Me Induis, Nunc Me Cognosces'.

SHEILA

What is that?

MISS LUCKMORE

A sophisticated sentence contributes sophistication you freely desire of your choice tonight.

SHEILA

But what does it mean?

MISS LUCKMORE

Our in-store Latinologist presently beset with winter pox is yet to return.

SHEILA

It's OK. I was just curious.

MISS LUCKMORE

But Adonis will transcend an impression and he will compliment you.

Sheila gives her money. Miss Luckmore carefully rolls the note and places it in a small metal cylinder. She places the metal cylinder in a chute and off it travels through the internal piping.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

Touch it. Feel it here.

Sheila strokes the material of the dress.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

And may I interest you in other desired supposes in our exclusive boutique?

SHEILA

I'm fine for now, thank you. My lunchbreak is almost over.

Miss Luckmore takes a Dentley & Soper's carrier bag and yanks it hard in order to open it up.

MISS LUCKMORE

I would like you to announce your locus of residence followed by the numbers to your telephone.

SHEILA

Sheila de Whitley, 16 Bartholomews
Mews. Thames Valley-on-Thames.
Telephone number 01632 960786.

Instead of writing down Sheila's details, Miss Luckmore stands facing her, clearly memorising what she hears. The two ladies wait for the change to return whilst the shop Muzak gently wafts the time away.

A woman with a bunch of camisoles pips another customer who only has a hat to the front of the queue behind Sheila. Both Sheila and Miss Luckmore are as still as mannequins as the other ladies queue, browse and try things on. One woman slowly turns a circular rack full of colourful blouses as if it were a carousel. Miss Luckmore stands formally holding her hands together and sincerely smiling at any customer who catches her eye. The whole department feels as if it's under a trance during the long wait for the change. A friend of the woman with the camisoles keeps returning with more and more items.

A SLOW ZOOM-IN onto the dress as it lies folded on the table. Miss Luckmore can't resist gazing at it and strokes it once more with her long red fingernails almost feeling an erotic charge what with her heightened expression. Sheila notices Miss Luckmore's hand caressing the material and glances at her. Brief eye contact is made and suddenly they both jump as an almighty thud signals that the change has arrived through the money chute. Miss Luckmore gets out the change for Sheila. The friend of the camisole woman continues to casually load up purposefully oblivious to the woman behind with the hat.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

MISS LUCKMORE

The pleasure is all mine, Sheila de Whitley. Adonis will be waiting and he will compliment you.

32 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK. DAY.

32

Sheila can be seen showing her colleagues the dress behind the booths, as they all comment on it. The thickness of the glass means that their conversation is inaudible. A customer enters and slams his hand on the counter for attention. Sheila instantly returns to her desk.

33 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S CONTROL ROOM. DAY.

33

In a dark control room where all the money chutes end up, the phone rings. A hand with long red fingernails picks up the phone to hear Miss Luckmore.

MISS LUCKMORE (OFF-SCREEN)

Sheila de Whitley, 16 Bartholomews
Mews. Thames Valley-on-Thames.
Telephonic code; 6 and 8 and 6 and

..

The hand writes down Sheila's details.

34 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' FASHION BOUTIQUE. DAY. 34

MISS LUCKMORE (ON THE PHONE)
8 and 6 and 2 and stop.

After putting the phone down, Miss Luckmore lets out a banshee scream.

35 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 35

Sheila tries on the dress in the mirror and feels herself to be attractive again. The dress empowers her and for the first time in years, her eyes are full of joy, sexual confidence and anticipation. Gwen can be heard chatting on the phone. A stray pubic hair visibly sticks out of the material causing instant revulsion. Sheila quickly picks at the hair and repeatedly flicks it off in disgust. For a fleeting moment, Sheila thinks she saw a mannequin on opening the mirror door of her wardrobe. She closes the wardrobe again to check, only there's nothing there.

36 INT. SHEILA'S HOME - STAIRWELL. NIGHT. 36 *

Sheila walks down and notices Gwen blocking the stairs as she chats on the phone. *

SHEILA *

Excuse me .. excuse me. *

Gwen is too engrossed in conversation to hear and Sheila walks right over her with the red dress ruffling her hair. *

36B INT. SHEILA'S KITCHEN. NIGHT

36B *

Sheila enters to find Vince practicing his drawing. *

SHEILA *

I'm off. Dinner's in the fridge. *

VINCE *

What you done to your hair? *

SHEILA *

Why? *

VINCE *

Looks like the council cut it. *

SHEILA (HURT) *

Thanks. *

VINCE *

You're not dating are you? *

SHEILA *

Why? Aren't I allowed to? *

VINCE *

Bit soon? *

SHEILA *

I didn't know there was a time limit. *

VINCE *

I thought you wanted to get back with dad. *

SHEILA *

That was a while ago and your dad clearly had other ideas. *

Vince shrugs his shoulders. *

SHEILA (CONT'D) *

Can you tell that femme fatale of yours to get off the phone? It's going to cost me a fortune. *

37 INT. SHEILA'S CAR. NIGHT. 37

Wearing the Dentley & Soper's dress, Sheila drives along a lonely country lane.

SHEILA ON ANSWERPHONE (OFF-SCREEN)

You've reached 01632 960786. I'm not in right now, but if you leave a message, I'll get straight back to you.

ADONIS (OFF-SCREEN)

It's Adonis again. Amesos Greek Restaurant at 7.30. I'll be wearing a dark Donningtonio's suit, carrying a rose. I'm 6ft, 1, slim, short, back and sides. If you don't find me, I'll find you.

38 INT. AMESOS RESTAURANT. NIGHT. 38

Sheila is patiently waiting for Adonis.

39 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S SHOP WINDOW. NIGHT. 39

Miss Luckmore and Miss Fatherson dress the mannequins inside the shop window display. After they leave, the lights go off. A ZOOM into the vortex reveals the photographer's lens again.

39B PHOTO STUDIO MONTAGE 39B

A rapid montage of catalogue shots.

40 INT. AMESOS RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

40

Adonis taps Sheila on the shoulder and makes her jump.

ADONIS
Box number 1592.

Sheila recovers from the fright.

ADONIS (CONT'D)
Did I scare you?

SHEILA
No .. it's fine.

ADONIS
I got some love vouchers that will
give us ten percent off, as long as
we share the same pudding.

SHEILA
Pudding .. sounds good.. join me.

Adonis places his briefcase on the table to get out a rose
for Sheila.

ADONIS
As promised.

Several roses can be glimpsed inside the suitcase, as Adonis
ponders which one to offer. He picks a wilted specimen and
offers it to Sheila.

SHEILA
Thank you.

Adonis looks Sheila up and down.

SHEILA (NERVOUS) (CONT'D)
What?

ADONIS
You look different.

SHEILA
How?

ADONIS
Your hair.

SHEILA
Hair grows back.

The comment touches a nerve with the bald Adonis, as Sheila
pointedly glances up at his shiny pate.

41 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S CHUTE ROOM. NIGHT. 41

Miss Luckmore retires to the backroom and clocks out on a pagan-looking dial. Taking off her wig and placing it on a mannequin head, the completely bald Miss Luckmore makes a series of cryptic signs with her hands and arms and then places herself within the confines of the dispatch chute. Curled up like a foetus, Miss Luckmore screams as the chute falls into the basement. Another member of staff called Miss Fatherson enters the backroom and follows the same ritual.

42 INT. AMESOS RESTAURANT. NIGHT. 42

Sheila tries to break the ice with Adonis as they study the menu. His listless tone and lifeless expression is completely at odds with the 'fun, dynamic' character she thought she'd meet.

SHEILA

Do you know what you're having?

ADONIS

In a minute, OK?

SHEILA

The moussaka looks good.

Both Sheila and Adonis notice a spider on the table. Just as Sheila tries to rescue it, Adonis swats it so hard with his napkin that a man behind turns round. Sheila is speechless as Adonis returns to studying the menu.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

So you like dancing, then?

ADONIS

Not tonight. I sprained my ankle.

SHEILA

I didn't mean tonight. Just in general, you like dancing?

ADONIS

Yeah.

SHEILA

It said in your Lonely Hearts advertisement that you like laughing.

ADONIS

Yeah.

SHEILA (STRUGGLING)
What kind of things?

ADONIS (STONE COLD SERIOUS)
Funny things.

Sheila knows she should drop it, but can't resist asking another question related to Adonis's advert.

SHEILA
What about cooking?

ADONIS
What is this? An exam?

A Greek waiter called Vlassis approaches Sheila and Adonis with a bowl of nuts. *

VLASSIS
Friendly evenings, guests. Welcome to Amesos, my name is Vlassis and you are? *

SHEILA (FRIENDLY)
Sheila de Whitley. *

ADONIS (INCREDULOUS)
Adonis Jackson. *

VLASSIS
And may I take your lucky orders? *

The waiter indicates that Adonis should go first, only he can't make up his mind as he loses himself in the menu. Sheila and the waiter patiently wait for Adonis to make up his mind. *

VLASSIS (CONT'D)
Madam? *

SHEILA
There will be a tzatziki for the starter and a vegetable moussaka for the main. Oh, and a glass of the house wine, please.

VLASSIS
Instantly, madam. And you, sir? *

Adonis's eyes are firmly fixed on the menu as he struggles to make up his mind.

VLASSIS (CONT'D)
Sir, if you wish to investigate further, let me return later. *

Sheila starts to feel the embarrassment and notices the waiter hiding his impatience as Adonis becomes defeated by all the different choices on the menu.

VLASSIS (CONT'D)

*

What about refreshing drinks to drink?

ADONIS

There will be a beer.

VLASSIS

*

Instantly. I'll come back for your
lucky order.

Adonis loses himself in the menu again. An embarrassed Sheila doesn't know where to look as he grabs a handful of nuts from the bowl.

43 INT. SHEILA'S CAR. NIGHT. 43

Sheila drives Adonis home and he suddenly disappears from the passenger seat.

44 INT. OUTSIDE SHEILA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT. 44

Sheila tries to use the bathroom only someone is in there.

45 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 45

Sheila undresses for bed, but can't undo the dress. She struggles and tries to lift it over her head, only for it to get stuck. Struggling for breath, she wriggles and pulls as hard as she can until the dress comes off revealing a strange rash on her upper chest.

46 INT. OUTSIDE SHEILA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT. 46

A flustered Sheila tries to use the bathroom again, but it's still occupied. She knocks on the door, but no answer.

SHEILA

Vince? Vince! Get a move on, I'm
desperate! Vince!

Gwen opens the door in her underwear.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Sorry .. I didn't know you were
staying tonight.

GWEN

Didn't Vince tell you?

SHEILA

Well, maybe I didn't hear.

GWEN

I hope it's not a problem.

SHEILA

Of course not, no.

GWEN

Nice night out?

SHEILA

Yes, thank you. Just caught up with a friend.

GWEN

Spinach on the menu?

SHEILA

Yes. Why?

GWEN

Just that you have a bit caught between your teeth.

Sheila feels humiliated and starts licking her teeth.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Your friend didn't tell you?

Sheila shakes her head.

GWEN (CONT'D)

That wasn't very nice of her? Or was it him?

SHEILA

Him, actually. Where's Vince? He didn't answer when I called.

GWEN

I think he knocked himself out. Always the way with him. As soon as he comes he's out for the count.

Sheila is horrified by the intimate revelations.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Must be the pressure of those mock exams. Should get better by February.

Sheila is speechless.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Did you get anything nice in the sales?

SHEILA

Not much. You?

GWEN

I found some very tasteful Carpathian suspenders at Dentley & Soper's.

Gwen clearly relishes getting a rise out of Sheila and studies her mortified reaction.

GWEN (CONT'D)
Seventy percent off.

SHEILA (ALMOST LOSING HER VOICE)
That's what I call a discount.

GWEN
I'm sorry if I was too long in the
shower. . I won't keep you any
longer, as I know you're desperate.

47 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 47

Sheila takes a look at her other options from the replies to her Lonely Hearts advert. Amidst the standard passport pics, lies one distasteful photo of a man sporting an erect penis. Another man has a photograph of himself filling up his expensive car with petrol. Another photograph shows a man in his living room as he sits smiling with his Yorkshire terrier on his lap. The photograph is taken at night and the mannequin from Dentley & Soper's can just about be seen in the background outside his window in the back garden. One photo of a man called Zach who's laughing after a snowball has been thrown in his face grabs Sheila's attention. She takes the photo strip of hers and cuts out the second image.

48 EXT. STREETS. NIGHT. 48 *

Queues of people form outside shops when it's still dark.

49 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 49

In Sheila's wardrobe, the dress from Dentley & Soper's hangs ominously. As Sheila sleeps, the hanger can be heard jolting back and forth.

50 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 50

The dispatch chute slowly rises up revealing a curled-up and bald Miss Luckmore.

51 INT. SHEILA'S WARDROBE. NIGHT. 51

The dress manically jolts back and forth along the clothing rail.

52 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S NIGHT. 52

Miss Luckmore is sorting out stock in the Ladies' Department. She also pulls the mannequins apart and puts new clothing on them. She peers out the window and can see the silent queue of shoppers in the dark.

53 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. DAWN. 53

Sheila is getting dressed and opens her wardrobe to look for her dress, only for it to have gone missing. Sheila flicks through the rail and looks in her drawers and on a pile of clothes by her bed. She also looks in her laundry bin, but can't find it. Gwen is taking forever in the bathroom.

54 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAWN. 54

Miss Luckmore faces the crowds of people at the door and falls into her greeting freeze.

55 INT. VINCE'S BEDROOM. DAY. 55

Sheila enters the bedroom only to instantly trip over Gwen's slippers left in the middle of the entrance. After a quick search, Sheila finds the dress on the floor next to Gwen's camisole. Vince enters.

VINCE
What you doing?

SHEILA (HOLDING UP THE DRESS)
You tell me. How did this end up in here?

VINCE
Eh?

SHEILA
The next time your girlfriend wants to try something on, how about asking me first?

VINCE
You got a screw loose?

SHEILA
Don't talk to me like that.

VINCE
Gwen wouldn't be seen dead in something like that.

SHEILA
So how come it's ended up in here?

VINCE

How would I know?

SHEILA

I don't like people going through my things, Vince.

VINCE

Touché, neither do I.

SHEILA

Don't touché me, I've had enough of Gwen making a mini-bar from my wine and now helping herself to my wardrobe. She's turning my house into a boudoir and I'm not having it. It's becoming a bit disgusting if you must know.

VINCE

You're off your rocker, you know that? Why would Gwen try something on that makes her look like a middle-aged dinner lady on a hen night?

SHEILA

I'd love to hear you say that to Deirdre.

*

VINCE

With pleasure. I'd rather eat my snot than the burnt chow she shoves on our plates.

SHEILA

Don't you dare speak of her like that!

VINCE

You're the one who brought her up.

SHEILA

Like I said, the way she's carrying on is a bit disgusting and you'd do well to take heed of that.

VINCE (LAUGHING)

Who? Gwen or Deirdre?

*

SHEILA

Still laughing at your own jokes?

VINCE (FEELING BATTERED)

Leave it out, mum..

SHEILA

No, I'm not going to leave it out, young Vincent. I'll say it again because nothing gets through your head. To be frank, I find Gwen a bit disgusting and the sooner you take that on board the better.

56 STILL PHOTO MONTAGE - RADIO REPORT 56

A series of photographs of shoppers in town is mixed with a local radio report interviewing people about what they bought in the sales.

57 EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 57

Sheila walks past Dentley & Soper's and comes across one of her colleagues.

*
*

SHEILA

Hello.

The colleague pretends not to notice Sheila.

58 SCENE DELETED 58

59 INT. SHEILA'S UTILITY ROOM. NIGHT. 59 *

Sheila puts the dress in the washing machine along with Vince's clothing. His trousers and tops have one arm or leg inside out and the other arm or leg protruding the other way making everything twisted. Underwear is still inside discarded trousers and lone socks litter the floor. Gwen's underwear is caught up in Vince's clothing. In complete disgust, Sheila picks off Gwen's underwear as if it were a dead rodent. All clothing goes into the machine apart from Gwen's. As Sheila looks at the label for washing instructions on her dress, the symbols look more like sigils than anything related to washing.

*

60 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT. 60

Sheila returns to a game of Ludo with Vince and Gwen. Sheila is annoyed at the sight of Gwen helping herself to a whole bowl of nuts, which is meant for everyone. Whenever Gwen concentrates on her move, Sheila tries to subtly move the nut bowl further away from her, but in vain. Gwen continues to reach over for more nuts.

SHEILA
I hope you didn't move without me.

VINCE
Don't get paranoid, mum.

SHEILA
Now where were we?

GWEN (TO VINCE)
Your turn, Don Juan.

As Vince makes his move, Gwen notices Sheila's rash.

GWEN (CONT'D)
My God, what is that?

SHEILA
What?

GWEN (LOOKING AT SHEILA'S CHEST)
That looks nasty.

SHEILA
Just a rash of some sort.

GWEN
I hope it's not catchy.

VINCE
Yeah, what is that? I saw it the other day.

SHEILA
I don't know. An allergy of some sort. Maybe the washing powder.

VINCE
You should get it looked at, mum.

SHEILA
Don't scare me.

VINCE
I'm not scaring you. Just get a cream and Bob's yer uncle. For your sake.

GWEN
My financial advisor had something similar. Turned out to be some kind of blood infection. They ended up having to amputate her right arm.

Sheila can feel herself turning dizzy at the shock of such news.

VINCE

Don't give me that.

GWEN

Seriously. The doctors kept sending her home saying it's an allergy then she got really ill.

Sheila tries to ignore Gwen who lights up a cigarette. *

GWEN (CONT'D)

But it's fine now. She eventually learnt to write left-handed. Beautiful handwriting too.

(to Sheila)

Your turn.

Sheila throws the dice and ends up with a four that could take Gwen off the board, but she also has a choice of making an innocent move with another counter.

VINCE

Oh dear!

SHEILA

Mmm .. tough decision.

Sheila is severely tempted to wipe Gwen out, but decides to rise above it and not move the counter on Gwen's. She moves her other counter instead. Gwen breathes a sigh of relief.

61 INT. SHEILA'S UTILITY ROOM. NIGHT. 61 *

The washing machine vibrates with increasing force.

62 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT. 62

It's Gwen's turn and she throws a five, which gives her the choice of moving one of her two counters along without knocking anyone out or she could land on Sheila's counter, which is one step away from the safety of home. Sheila looks fearful, which Gwen instantly feeds off.

VINCE (FRENCH)

She'll hate you forever.

GWEN (FRENCH)

The bitch already does.

VINCE (FRENCH)

Don't talk about her like that. She's done a lot for you. Don't take her out. Seriously.

SHEILA

Do you have to talk French all the time?

GWEN

He has to practice for his A-Levels.

63 INT. SHEILA'S UTILITY ROOM. NIGHT. 63 *

The washing machine starts to violently shake.

64 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT. 64

Gwen enjoys the tension with Sheila and puts her hand on the innocent counter. Sheila calms down.

GWEN

Actually ..

Gwen changes her mind and puts her counter on Sheila's, sending her all the way back to the beginning again.

GWEN (CURT) (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Sheila looks as if she could murder Gwen.

VINCE (FRENCH)

You've done it now.

The adrenalin in Gwen soon manifests itself in the giggles. As the repressed laughter starts to make Gwen shake, Vince notices the ceiling vibrating.

VINCE (CONT'D)

What's going on up there?

Vince and Sheila quickly run upstairs. Gwen stays put and cheats her Ludo counter forward.

65 INT. SHEILA'S UTILITY ROOM. NIGHT. 65 *

The machine is shaking up and down.

66 SCENE DELETED 66 *

67 INT. SHEILA'S UTILITY ROOM. NIGHT.

67 *

The vibrations become destructive, as all the objects on top of the machine are thrown off and it bangs more and more violently, smashing the tiles. Vince and Sheila try to wrestle with the machine that is shaking uncontrollably, but they're no match for it. Sheila tries to turn the machine off, but in vain. She then unplugs the machine, only it makes no difference. They start bickering over how to stop the machine from convulsing. The thing rips off the wall, causing water to shoot out from the pipes and flood the bathroom. Sheila cuts her hand badly when the machine knocks it against a jagged piece of metal from another loose pipe. Blood gushes out of an artery on her wrist, but still she's throwing all her weight on the machine. Vince also puts all his might into stopping the machine. Gwen's perfume falls off an overhead shelf onto Vince's head followed by a tub of washing powder. Sheila ignores the washing machine and tries to nurse Vince. Parts of the washing machine start flying off and the door violently opens flooding the floor with red water and soaking Sheila and Vince. As soon as the door opens, the shaking stops.

68 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE - MEZZANINE.NIGHT. 68 *

Miss Luckmore and Miss Lulworth approach Reading, the mannequin. As they gently start to dismantle Reading, Mr Lundy observes the ritual, hiding behind a rail of lingerie. As Reading is laid out on the floor, Miss Lulworth sits on her face and begins to gently wash her breasts with a sponge. Miss Luckmore is at the other end of the mannequin, washing her thighs. Both women whisper 'Reading' as they wash her. A naked female mannequin situated on the corner of the Ladies' Boutique sports an erection. Mr Lundy becomes increasingly flustered as Miss Luckmore peels off Reading's underwear revealing a shock of pubic hair. A scar on her abdomen has the same outline as the dark patch on the dress. Mr Lundy unzips his trousers and begins to masturbate whilst watching Miss Luckmore applying the sponge to Reading's intimate region and whispering her name, whilst Miss Lulworth continues to wash and caress the upper body. Mr Lundy falls under a trance as Miss Luckmore discovers that Reading is menstruating. She gently wipes the blood with her hand and, turning to Mr Lundy, puts it to her open lips. Mr Lundy nears orgasm and Miss Luckmore holds her vampire-like stare, letting the blood ooze down her chin. Miss Lulworth rises up off Reading. The two women stare at Mr Lundy, whilst Reading lies motionless on the floor. Losing himself in a sexual spell, Mr Lundy closes his eyes and ejaculates.

MR LUNDY (A BREATHELESS, ORGASMIC
WHIMPER)

Reading ..

Mr Lundy's sperm flies through the dark air in slow-motion, first in profile, as if it were some milky, globular moth.

Miss Luckmore pants in anticipation as she waits for the sperm to land on a hanging dress in front of Mr Lundy.

The sperm slowly propels itself towards its pre-determined destination. Mr Lundy looks utterly spent as the sperm hits the dress. The female mannequin's penis starts to droop and Reading's face is magically devoid of blood.

69 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. DAY. 69

The sperm has dried on the dress forming a star-like, glistening pattern against the black material. An early-morning shopper admires the formation on the dress and takes it off the rail to try on.

70 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK. DAY. 70

Stash and Clive approach Sheila and ask her to follow. No dialogue can be heard behind the glass.

71 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK - OFFICE. DAY. 71

Sheila enters a small room with Stash and Clive. Both superiors are rather timid and clearly operating under the thumb of the widely feared Pete Mathinson. It's clear from their conversation that they hate hauling Sheila in. A framed diagram on the wall illustrates the ethos of the Waingel's Wavelength. At the far end of the room is a rail full of period costumes, which Clive and Stash like to use for their roleplay scenarios.

STASH

Thanks for coming in, Sheila.

Stash brushes a few pine needles off his chair.

STASH (CONT'D)

Look at that, still finding pine needles everywhere.

CLIVE

All over our sofa back home, as well. Must get a plastic tree next year.

STASH

Yeah, we must. Now, how's it going, Sheila?

SHEILA

Yeah. Everything's fine.

STASH (NOTICING SHEILA'S BANDAGED HAND)

What happened to your hand?

SHEILA

Nothing much. Washing machine went bananas.

STASH

Well, we know a very good repair company if you need anyone.

CLIVE

What's that? Staverton's?

STASH

Yeah. Staverton's Wash. In your area. Did wonders with our machine, didn't they Clive?

CLIVE

Yeah, they did. Really good mechanic. Just let us know and we'll give you the number.

Stash nods in agreement and then tries to shift gear towards an uneasy topic.

STASH

How are things going? You feel on top of things at the moment?

SHEILA

Yes. I think so.

CLIVE

We didn't see you at the Christmas bowling.

SHEILA

I think I had a lot on with my son that night.

STASH

Sheila, Pete Mathinson spoke to us the other day. Now, he's really impressed with how you're all doing. Lots of good feedback.

CLIVE

He also noticed how attune you were to the Waingel's Wavelength.

STASH

Now one thing he flagged with us, though; he wasn't sure about your handshake.

SHEILA

Oh.

STASH

Pete thinks you're doing really well and likes the way you smell as well.

But to tell you the truth, the handshake did come up and Pete commented on how perhaps it wasn't meaningful enough.

Sheila is speechless. Clive hands Sheila a photocopy of an article on the importance of handshakes.

CLIVE

Sheila, Pete wanted you to have this article here. It's on the importance of a meaningful handshake. Going forward, we all feel you could benefit from looking at it.

SHEILA

Sure, I'll take a look.

STASH

It's written in a fun, easy language and there's a cartoon at the end which summarises the key points.

CLIVE

Sheila, if you want, we're happy to try out a roleplay scenario that involves handshaking.

STASH

It doesn't have to be a bank scenario. We've got a range of costumes we could all try on ..

SHEILA (INTERRUPTING)

It's OK, I can practice at home.

PART TWO OF SCENE IF TIME ALLOWS

*

STASH

One other thing, Sheila. One of your colleagues noticed that you visit the ladies' room prior to clocking out for feeding time.

*

Sheila looks shocked.

CLIVE

Personally, I pay a visit after I clock out.

STASH

Me too.

SHEILA

Who told you this?

STASH

It wouldn't be professional of us
to say her name ...

*

SHEILA

I normally clock-out and instantly
leave the building.

STASH

If it's a one-off, we understand,
but we just wanted to flag it up
with you. A minute or two might not
seem significant, but when we spoke
to your colleague she did some
calculations and rightly reminded
us that if these unwarranted toilet
visits were to happen every day, at
an estimate of two minutes per
visit, you would accrue over four-
hundred minutes each year.

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CLIVE

To tell you the truth, two minutes
for a visit to the toilet is
generous.

STASH

In my experience, it's two-and-a-
half. I timed myself just before
this meeting.

STASH (CONT'D)

There you go. That amounts to a
day's extra pay per year for not
working. It adds up.

SHEILA

It was a one-off, I can assure you.
Whoever informed you of my
transgression obviously doesn't
notice that I'm regularly in ten
minutes early. Maybe you could do
the maths on that.

72

INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAY.

72

Sheila tries on a dress in the changing room and catches sight of the mannequins through the side of the changing room curtain. She also hears Miss Luckmore serving another customer. Sheila comes out to hand the blouse back.

CUSTOMER

What do you think?

MISS LUCKMORE

Is fantastic.

CUSTOMER

Let me just try it. With this shawl...?

*
*

MISS LUCKMORE

The shawlest vantage praises
January customer for she is in
purchase of our sacred domain.

Sheila hands back the blouse she tried on to Miss Luckmore.

SHEILA

A little tight around the
shoulders. I knew I'd need a size
up after Christmas.

MISS LUCKMORE

When your stature is emphasised it
is my duty to provide you with a
notion of proportion that reflects
your ideal of dimension. Wait here.

As Miss Luckmore looks for a size up, Sheila browses through the shop catalogue and notices the model (from the beginning of the film) in her dress. Suddenly, Miss Luckmore appears behind Sheila and gently turns the page.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

Our perspectives on the spectres of
mortality must not be compromised
by an askew index of commerce.

Sheila tries to turn the page back to the model, only Miss Luckmore presses her hand harder on the catalogue resulting in the image tearing. Miss Luckmore gasps.

SHEILA

I'm sorry.

MISS LUCKMORE

The model. The affliction.

SHEILA

What happened?

MISS LUCKMORE

A calamity. Imagine. And so young.

Sheila is shocked.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

Jill Woodmere, yes, she. Our range of garments she defined through a rapture of display. And here, the last dress she wore. Oh, how she adored it.

Miss Luckmore refers to what now seems to be the cursed dress that Sheila bought.

SHEILA

I'm sorry.

MISS LUCKMORE

It's OK, Sheila de Whitley. It was untold.

Mr Lundy suddenly appears and whispers in Miss Luckmore's ear. She nods and Mr Lundy walks off.

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)

The blouse of silk?

SHEILA

The blouse, yes. I'll try it on.

Sheila walks towards the changing room to try it on, but stops to ask one more question.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Sorry, one last thing. How many of those dresses were in stock?

MISS LUCKMORE

One. Only the one.

SHEILA

And the model wore that same dress?

MISS LUCKMORE

Yes, but imagine; she extensively showered before that photograph.

It quickly dawns on Sheila that she's purchased something malevolent as well as cheap.

Sheila stands by as two men from Staverton's Wash struggle and strain as they carry a new washing machine through the hallway

*
*
*

As Sheila walks away, she notices a sticky note from Gwen, which reads: 'ATTENTION SHEILA, ZACH CALLED. SOMETHING ABOUT 6832. HIS NUMBER 457924. YOU WILL CALL HIM BACK IN THE MORNING. GWEN (kisses) Sheila takes the note with her.

*

74 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 74

Miss Luckmore discreetly tears out the page of Jill modelling the cursed dress from the catalogue. Whilst nobody is looking, she screws it up and, though not visible under the dress, slowly inserts it up herself.

75 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 75

Sheila turns the pages of the Dentley & Soper's catalogue to find the image of Jill. French whispering continues from Vince's bedroom. Upon finding the image of the smiling Jill, Sheila finds herself overcome with fear and sadness. A few more replies to Sheila's Lonely Hearts ad are on her bedside table. To her horror, Sheila opens a letter containing a photo of Stash and Clive with suggestive expressions. Stash wears a biker jacket and Clive is half-naked with a bandana on. A note by the photo reads; 'How about it, sugar? Send us a photo.'

*
*
*

76 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAWN. 76

Miss Luckmore opens a box of wigs to put on the mannequins.

77 INT. DOCTOR'S CLINIC. DAY. 77

A doctor's hand takes blood from Sheila and a matrix of pinpricks mark her back, each with a number and allergen written on the flesh next to it, as she undergoes an allergy test. Dairy provokes a minor welt, otherwise nothing shows up. The doctor takes a photograph of Sheila's chest.

*

78 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAY. 78

Miss Luckmore stands in the middle of the Ladies' Fashion Boutique basking in the retail splendour of the sales.

79 INT. SHEILA'S HALLWAY. NIGHT. 79

Sheila holds the note from Gwen with Zach's number and puts it against his photograph.

She tries to summon the courage to pick up the phone. She eventually picks it up after a false start.

80 INT. SHEILA'S CAR. NIGHT. 80

Sheila drives at night wearing a different dress for a date with Zach. She catches a glimpse of what looks like the Dentley & Soper's building in a wheat field through her rear view mirror. When she looks again, the apparition has gone. A truck passes by and the full beam headlights almost blind Sheila.

81 INT. AMESOS RESTAURANT. NIGHT. 81

Zach sits at the same table as Adonis did on the last date. As Sheila arrives at the table, Zach turns to look at her.

SHEILA

Zach?

Zach smiles and offers his hand.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Sheila. Box number 6832.

Sheila beams with happiness, as he smiles.

ZACH

I have some love vouchers here with some exciting discounts, that's if you don't mind sharing a pudding with me.

Forgetting how antagonistic she was to the same suggestion from Adonis, Sheila's eyes light up.

82 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 82

The dress lies motionless on Sheila's floor. Her bedroom door is open leading to the small hallway by Vince's room. Gwen and Vince can be heard whispering in French next door.

83 INT. VINCE'S ROOM. NIGHT. 83

Vince ties Gwen to his bedposts.

84 INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 84

The dress is now in the hallway, only Vince's door is closed.

85 INT. VINCE'S ROOM. NIGHT. 85

Vince goes under the sheets to pleasure Gwen.

86 INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 86

The dress is already under Vince's door and pulls itself all the way in.

87 INT. AMESOS RESTAURANT. NIGHT. 87

ZACH

You look familiar, you know that?

SHEILA

Oh no, don't scare me.

ZACH

Seriously. I've seen you somewhere, I don't know where, but ..

SHEILA

You bank at Waingels?

ZACH

OK, I thought it was something like that. I remember now. You fined me for going over my limit.

SHEILA

Not me, I don't fine. I just have to follow orders from above.

ZACH

I think I still have that letter from you, asking me to make an appointment with your managers. You were kind of stern. I liked it.

88 INT. VINCE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 88

Gwen lies back with her eyes closed as Vince pleasures her from under the sheets. As she opens her eyes, she sees the dress splayed across the ceiling directly above her. Before she can even finish screaming the dress falls onto her face, smothering and muffling her. With her hands still tied to the bedposts, Gwen frantically shakes her body hoping Vince will notice, only he assumes she's convulsing with pleasure. Her screams are inaudible beneath the dress. Only repeated kicking from Gwen alerts Vince to her predicament. He quickly grabs the dress and throws it on the floor.

VINCE (UNTYING GWEN)

What happened?

Gwen is too out of breath to say anything.

89 INT. ZINZAN'S NIGHTCLUB. NIGHT.

89

Sheila and Zach indulge in a slow dance at ZinZan's nightclub. Sheila embraces Zach and rests her head on his shoulder as they dance. The disc jockey booth is high up on a mezzanine level with a bold sign that reads, 'Song Requests Will Be Prosecuted'. The disc jockey stares at everyone dancing.

SHEILA

It's hard to make friends in this town.

ZACH

I know.

SHEILA

Is it just me?

ZACH

No. It's OK, don't think about it.

SHEILA

It's hard to make friends here. It really is.

Sheila looks longingly at Zach in the hope that he'll kiss her.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

You met many others through this?

ZACH

A few. You?

SHEILA

One or two. I don't need to meet anyone anymore.

ZACH

Me neither.

The pair hug as they continue dancing. Zach tenderly lifts Sheila's chin and fills her mouth with a kiss. A lonely woman waiting for someone to ask her to dance wishes she could be Sheila.

89B EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT.

89B

A slow ZOOM into the centre of a vortex design behind the mannequins in the window display revealing the camera lens.

89C SCENE DELETED 89C *

90 INT. SCENE DELETED 90

91 INT. VINCE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 91

Sheila knocks on the door.

SHEILA (OFF-SCREEN)
Vince? Vince?

Sheila enters and sighs when finding his bedside lamp on. A bottle of wine, with a post-it note that reads 'GWEN'S WINE' is on the bedside table along with an ash tray full of cigarette butts and a packet of condoms. She turns the lamp off, but immediately turns it on again when noticing a nude drawing of Gwen on the bedside table next to the open catalogue. Various shrivelled tissues are scattered next to some other nude drawings. Sheila is too curious to resist going through Vince's belongings and finds a number of things she'd wish she had never set eyes on. Under Vince's bedsheets is a book by Dr Roderick de Vranick titled, 'How To Flirt With Older Women'. Sheila notices a pair of Gwen's knickers on the floor featuring a printed image of Vince's face on the inside of the back. Sheila looks as if she's about to be sick. More incriminating to come is a series of graphic drawings of the most intimate parts of Gwen's body. A close-up of Gwen spreading her butt cheeks is imbued with an almost religious framing as rays of preternatural light emanate from her anus. A row of worshippers kneel before the rays of Gwen light. Most embarrassing for Sheila is a photograph of a social gathering in which she and a friend, standing behind Gwen, glare disparagingly at her, unaware that a photograph was being taken of them. An envelope with the words 'Mon Vince' contains a very long French letter from Gwen. Sheila takes the letter with her and exits. *

92 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 92

Sheila is asleep and the cursed dress floats directly above her.

93 INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

93

After photocopying Gwen's letter and posting it in the translation box, Sheila goes through various back copies of the local paper stored as microfiche. Eventually, she finds an article on Jill's death. A photo of her looking happy and radiant sits next to the article describing how the 39-year-old mother was run over at a zebra crossing.

94 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAY.

94

Sheila tries to return the dress to Miss Luckmore, who looks utterly shocked when presented with the item. Trying her best to remain calm, Miss Luckmore tries to fend Sheila off and get her and the dress out as politely as possible.

MISS LUCKMORE

I have reached the dimension of remorse, Sheila de Whitley. The dress. I can't claim with its reacceptance if its purchase is not evidenced.

SHEILA

I had the receipt. I put them all in one place, but I don't know where it's gone.

Mr Lundy walks by and notices the dress. He signals to Sheila that he wants it out.

MISS LUCKMORE

Sheila de Whitley, customer dearest, don't betray your trust in us, but we cannot help on this occasion of misfortune.

SHEILA

Look, honestly, I don't need a refund. Just let me exchange it for something else.

MISS LUCKMORE

A casual exchange seldom expresses a lady's self-assurance and her embodiment of fashion through elegance and sober observances of dressing.

SHEILA

You know what? Just take the dress. I don't need anything back. Really, just take it.

MISS LUCKMORE

Competent laments can be fairly addressed to Miss Fatherson.

(MORE)

MISS LUCKMORE (CONT'D)
Distinction avows her noble
hearing.

Miss Luckmore makes a 'psst' sound for Miss Fatherson to come over, only she doesn't hear and continues wiping a mannequin's breast with a damp flannel. Miss Luckmore repeats the 'psst' in exasperation, but fails to get her attention.

MISS LUCKMORE (FORCING A DISTRACTION)
(CONT'D)
My head is reminding me, the
customer who requires an ushering
towards our Palace Dinners range.
There, she will find classical line
that befits a lady of flamboyance
who summons luxury at once.

Miss Luckmore conveniently rushes over to another customer and Sheila storms out.

SHEILA
Forget it.

94B DENTLEY & SOPER'S STAIRWELL. DAY.

94B *

As Sheila solemnly exits, the manager, Mr Lundy apprehends her.

MR LUNDY
Like a whisper in an ocean, like a
feather in a storm, a dress of
deduction finds its character in a
prism of retail abstraction.

SHEILA
I don't understand.

MR LUNDY
Miss Luckmore did your bidding and
my jurisdiction is to scrutinise
her benevolence, for at Dentley &
Soper's Trusted Department Store,
our devotion is to you, dear Sheila
de Whitley.
Miss Luckmore experienced a
transaction of ecstasy and I ask if
you could mutually sanctify her
claim.

SHEILA
Look, this is nothing personal, but
I'm done with the sales, thank you.

MR LUNDY
Commerce is but a veil of
expectation.
(MORE)

MR LUNDY (CONT'D)

Here in this window of exchange,
consider a plethora of advantage,
an abundance of privilege and an
enhancement of pleasure, to which,
you dear Madam, are privy.

SHEILA

Sorry, but I have to go back to
work.

Mr Lundy holds onto Sheila's arm as she leaves.

MR LUNDY

I salute your dedication to the
dimensions of profit, dear Sheila,
but your dismissal of such a
prestigious consumerist festivity
leaves me bereft.
Miss Luckmore served you with
grace?

SHEILA

She got my back up gracefully if
that's what you mean.

MR LUNDY

And her eyes demonstrated rapport
in a cordial context?

SHEILA

There was eye contact, yes.

MR LUNDY

Did Miss Luckmore engage with the
doctrine of our store and did the
experience consolidate your
perception of the paradigm of
retail?

SHEILA

My perception has been
consolidated, thank you.

MR LUNDY

Her breath? Her odour or something
else malodorous, perhaps?

SHEILA (EXHAUSTED)

I just need to go back to work,
thank you.

Mr Lundy slips Sheila a Dentley & Soper's shopping voucher.

MR LUNDY

Just a gesture of goodwill for the
inaugural consumer. A fantastic
offer, I inferred to myself in
jest.

SHEILA

I don't see why I can't return this dress.

Mr Lundy tries to laugh off the question whilst stroking the dress as it pokes out the bag.

MR LUNDY

The very purpose of this seasonal retail occasion is to expunge. Returning what has already left The Ladies' Fashion Boutique of Dentley & Soper's Trusted Department Store goes against .. the nature of things. Such a pretty dress. I hope Adonis complimented you.

Sheila can't bring herself to say anything and leaves. A member of staff standing with his face to the wall turns to see what the commotion was, only to be shouted at.

MR LUNDY (CONT'D)

Pitcroft!

He turns back to face the wall.

95 INT. SHEILA'S LOUNGE. NIGHT.

95

Sheila and Zach check the Latin inscription on the dress against a Latin book

*
*

ZACH

'You who wear me will know me'.

*
*

SHEILA

What's that supposed to mean?

*
*

ZACH

It's a design feature. Just a bit of cheap mystery. You think anyone buying these things gives a damn what it all means?

*
*
*
*
*

SHEILA

Would you think I'm bonkers if I told you something's wrong with that dress?

*

ZACH

'Course not. I've never met a woman who didn't think there's something wrong with a dress.

SHEILA

A woman who modelled it died.

ZACH

And? Half the clothes I bought in the charity shop are from people who died. You really are cracking up, aren't you? It's a dress, it's a piece of cheap fabric. If you don't like it, then give it away, but don't run yourself around all this hocus pocus. Personally, I like you in it.

SHEILA

Really?

ZACH

Really.

SHEILA

You're not just saying that?

ZACH (SIGHING)

You look good in it. OK, you look good in most things, but that dress definitely shows you off.

Sheila considers what Zach is saying.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Put it on.

Sheila hesitates.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Don't tell me you're scared of a dress?

96

INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

96

Zach takes Sheila's dress off and the rash is still there.

SHEILA

Don't look at it.

ZACH

It's OK. It's OK.

Zach guides Sheila's hands towards his shirt buttons and she slowly undoes them, feeling his chest and kissing it.

They kiss, hug, fall onto the bed and begin to make love. The dress is left on the floor, but moves by itself and disappears under the bed.

- 97 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. (LATER) 97
 Sheila and Zach are asleep and the dress sneaks itself under the door. Sheila is woken by the faint rustle and opens the door. No sign of the dress, but Gwen can be seen returning to Vince's room from the bathroom. *
- 98 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAWN. 98
 It's dark, but suddenly the shop lights flicker into life revealing the mannequin that modelled the haunted dress. *
- 99 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. DAWN. 99
 A sinister ZOOM towards the wardrobe. *
- 100 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S - CHUTE. DAWN. 100
 Miss Luckmore arrives curled up in the dispatch chute. *
- 101 INT. SHEILA'S STAIRWAY. DAWN. 101
 The dress hangs in the air. *
- 102 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAWN. 102
 Miss Luckmore faces the crowds of people at the door and falls into her greeting freeze.
- 103 EXT. WOODLAND. DAY. 103 *

Sheila goes for a stroll in the park with Zach. The haunted dress is under Sheila's coat. A man walks towards them with his dog. *

ZACH *

You don't want to go into town today? *

SHEILA *

It's a nightmare on Saturdays. Why don't we just stay here? You know, slowly acclimatise you to Vince. *

ZACH *

Nobody's rushing you there. *

SHEILA *

I know. I just think it'd be good for him to see me back on my feet a little. *

ZACH *

He was a little short with me on the phone. *

SHEILA *

He's not in a good way. The whole separation really got to him, not helped by my ex trying to pit him against me. *

ZACH *

Ha! Join the club! *

Sheila notices the dog stopping to sit still and glare at her. *

SHEILA *

Is that dog alright? *

ZACH *

It's just resting. *

SHEILA *

It's staring at us. *

ZACH *

That's what he's probably thinking about you. Anyway, back to your son. Quick guide from you on how to win him over? *

The dog growls as Sheila and Zach pass. *

SHEILA *

Zach, I don't like it. *

*

Sheila keeps turning round. The dog starts to follow. *

DOG OWNER (TO SHEILA) *
He's not going to bite. Common *
sense, dear. *

(TO THE DOG) *
Come on, Darren. *

Before she knows it, Sheila is attacked by the dog and she *
falls to the ground flailing and screaming. Both Zach and the *
owner try to get the dog off Sheila, as it tears at her *
dress. *

DOG OWNER *
Darren! Darren! *

Blood splatters over Sheila's screaming face. The dog is
eventually pulled back.

DOG OWNER (CONT'D)
I don't know what happened! He's
never bitten anyone before!
(to the dog)
Darren, you bastard!

Sheila lies on the muddy ground in a bloody mess with her
coat and dress torn to shreds. Zach tries his best to help
her.

DOG OWNER (CONT'D)
This has never happened before, I
swear! Darren!

104 INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

104

Zach arrives to find Vince by Sheila's bed, as she still
tries to recover from the shock. Parts of her legs and arms
are bandaged up. Vince greets Zach with a degree of suspicion
as he offers his hand.

ZACH
Probably not the best time to
introduce myself. Zach.

VINCE (COLD, SHAKING HIS HAND)
Vince.

SHEILA (TO VINCE)
Zach is a friend from work.

A nurse arrives with Sheila's clothes. The dress is intact
whereas the coat is heavily ripped.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Did someone mend this?

The nurse looks confused.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

This was torn to shreds. I'm
telling you. This was torn to
shreds.

Sheila inspects the dress, which looks immaculate.

105 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 105

Sheila lies in bed staring at the dress hanging in the wardrobe, which has been purposefully left open.

106 EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S SHOP WINDOW. NIGHT. 106

Miss Luckmore undergoes a series of ritualistic seizures in front of each mannequin. *

107 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK STAFF ROOM. DAY. 107 *

Sheila eats a sandwich. Stash and Clive enter. *

CLIVE

How's your leg, Sheila?

SHEILA

Better, thank you.

STASH

Clive knows the local vet and he can confirm he destroyed the dog on your behalf.

CLIVE

He also wanted you to know that he took great pleasure in denying the dog its last biscuit.

Sheila is appalled at such a flippant comment, but tries to hide it. Clive turns his head as a woman walks past.

STASH

It must be a pain not being able to drive.

SHEILA

The doctor reckons I can start again tomorrow.

STASH (AWKWARD)

Oh, good. Sheila, can we have a word?

SHEILA

Of course.

108 INT. BANK MEETING ROOM. DAY.

108

Sheila clearly can't get the suggestive photo of Stash and Clive out of her mind, as they sit opposite her in complete ignorance. The rail of costumes is still behind Sheila.

*

STASH

How was your weekend?

SHEILA (INCREDULOUS)

Well .. interesting.

CLIVE

Anything nice in the sales?

SHEILA

Just a dress, but that was the other week.

CLIVE

Good bargains.

Sheila smiles politely to cover the awkwardness.

STASH

Sheila, I was pleased to see your name down on the bowling list again even though I don't think you should be in Ruth's team, but still, we have a nice balance of numbers this month.

CLIVE

Should be an interesting match.

STASH

Yeah. We look forward to it. Now Sheila, we caught up with Pete Mathinson this morning. Really meaningful meeting, just reviewing where we're going with various things. He was impressed with how you're getting on. All good. Only he mentioned that you waved at his mistress just by Landrake's Tuck Shop last weekend.

SHEILA

Yes, I remember. She waved back.

STASH

You see, she asked Pete to call up a meeting about the incident and we all came to the conclusion that your waving could only be classified as informal salutation.

SHEILA

I don't understand.

STASH

Technically, the mistress of a boss is classified as a superior according to company policy, hence her surprise at such a casual mode of greeting.

CLIVE

She urged us to term it as insolent salutation, but she gets a bit ahead of herself sometimes.

SHEILA

She smiled! She waved back!

STASH

To tell you the truth, Sheila, this all fits into a general pattern we're noticing.

CLIVE

And now when I look back at some of the recent bowling nights, I can see how low your scores have been. I just wondered if you found the time to reflect on that.

STASH

Everything alright at home?

SHEILA (TAKEN ABACK)

Yes.

STASH

Sheila, when we worked at the other branch in town, we had a member of staff very similar to you; diligent, hard-working, only Clive and I noticed a core of the inscrutable about her.

CLIVE

Not remotely on the Waingel's Wavelength, and also, I'm afraid to say, also prone to waving.

STASH

We didn't think anything of it until we found out she was in the habit of injecting illicit, illegal and foolhardy substances into her bloodstream.

Sheila can't believe what she's hearing.

CLIVE

Now we're not suggesting you are inclined that way, but nonetheless .. a story shared and all that ..

STASH (SUGGESTIVE)

And those mysterious toilet breaks before lunch.

SHEILA

One mysterious toilet break.

STASH

You would tell us if there was something? We can keep the police force out of this.

SHEILA

It's just been busy with my son and the school holidays.

CLIVE

What's wrong, Sheila? You can tell us.

SHEILA

Nothing. Just a few bad sleeping dreams, that's all.

STASH

Can you give us an example?

SHEILA

Just this one the other night; I was very close to my mother. I mean, in real life. My father died when I was young and then she and I became even closer. I loved her dearly. I had no space to store all her things after she died, which always makes me sad. I gave everything to charity, but wish I kept something.

109 INT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. (DREAM)

109

Sheila finds a box containing the cursed dress along with a photograph of her mother. *

SHEILA (OFF-SCREEN)

But in this sleep, I found an old dress of hers .. in a box and it smelt of my mother's perfume, which I hadn't come across in years. It brought me right back and made everything feel alright again. I put on the dress and looked in the mirror, but it wasn't me at all. It was my mother. *

Wearing the dress, Sheila looks into the mirror only to see her face decomposing with the same hair as her dead mother. *

SHEILA (OFF-SCREEN) (CONT'D)

Her flesh had disappeared after years in the grave. It was a skeleton with the same jet-black dyed hair. *

110 INT. BANK MEETING ROOM. DAY.

110

SHEILA

I remember when she bought this dye in real life. She was so fed up of the old ones dripping off in the rain, but this was permanent and so it was. More than her flesh.

STASH

Then what happened?

SHEILA

I caught the bus and everyone inside hid under their seats when they saw me.

CLIVE

Racists.

SHEILA *

I stank of my mother's corpse. The stench made the bus driver vomit and we went off a cliff. Then I woke up.

CLIVE

And what colour was the bus?

SHEILA

It was the colour of Thames Valley-on-Thames. Yes, it was *that* colour.

STASH

Interesting .. reminds me of a dream Clive and I had about the steeplechase.

*

CLIVE

Oh yeah, that.

111 INT. SHEILA'S STAIRWELL. NIGHT.

111

Sheila returns from work and checks her answerphone messages.

ZACH (OFF-SCREEN)

Hey. Was wondering what you're doing tonight. If you're feeling well enough to come over, I could put a roast on for you. Let me know.

Sheila saves the message.

LIBRARIAN (OFF-SCREEN)

Hello, this is the Translation Desk calling with a message for Sheila. Unfortunately, Library policy dictates that we can't translate any material of a lewd or pornographic nature, although you will be charged for the first few sentences prior to the first licentious word. If you would kindly visit us with your card, we can discuss a nominal fee and return the photocopy to you. Shame on you!

Sheila deletes the message. The third and final message is from Gwen speaking in French and within a few words, Sheila angrily deletes it.

112 EXT. SHEILA'S BEDROOM. DUSK.

112

Sheila packs various unwanted items into a suitcase along with the cursed dress.

113 INT. SHEILA'S HALLWAY. DUSK.

113

The car door can be heard being slammed and Sheila enters to call Vince, only to trip over Gwen's high heels left in the middle of the hall. In a mini-rage, Sheila takes one shoe and throws it out the front door.

SHEILA

I'm going to drop some stuff off at the charity shop if you've got anything that needs taking.

No answer.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

So is that a yes or a no?

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)

Maybe!

SHEILA

OK, well you go Monday, then. Don't forget to bring everything from the backseat.

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)

Just leave it in the hall!

SHEILA

Vince, I'm putting everything in the car for a reason!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)

What reason?

SHEILA

The car will be here tomorrow. Just grab the stuff and drop it off. I want it all cleared out by Monday!

No answer.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Yes?

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)

Yes!

SHEILA

OK, see you in the morning! I left food for you in the fridge!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)

Where are you going?

SHEILA

Staying with someone!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)
What? You mean, slaphead?

SHEILA
His name's Zach!

VINCE (OFF-SCREEN)
I thought you said he was a mate!

SHEILA
Yeah, well he's something a bit
more now!

114 INT. SHEILA'S CAR. NIGHT. 114

The dress is inside the suitcase on the backseat. Sheila looks in her rear view mirror and gets another fleeting glimpse of the Dentley & Soper's building. She looks behind her, but it's gone.

115 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 115

Miss Luckmore takes off her wig and makes a ritualistic arm gesture as she prepares to descend into the dispatch chute.

116 INT. SHEILA'S CAR. NIGHT. 116

A person can be seen ahead trying to hitchhike. Sheila slows down to see if she'll take the person or not. Amidst the smudge of darkness, rain and windscreen wipers, it seems to be the Dentley & Soper's mannequin wearing the dress. Sheila is terrified and puts her foot down. She drives as fast as she can, yet notices the same mannequin standing straight ahead of her in the middle of the road. She swerves to avoid the mannequin and crashes into a tree. The image freezes for a few seconds and then comes the impact followed by Sheila being shaken like a ragdoll amidst the shattered glass.

*

*

117 INT. COUNTRY ROAD. NIGHT. 117

Amidst the carnage and wreckage, a bloodied Sheila has a few moments of life left in her. The dress gracefully and slowly floats to the ground, landing almost within reach of Sheila. Sheila reaches out to grab the dress, only to die. The dress disappears. Ambulance sirens can be heard. As Sheila breathes her last breath, blood comes out of a stomach wound staining her blouse in an identical manner to the dark design pattern on the dress. The ambulance arrives and the swirl of its emergency lights illuminates Sheila's lifeless face.

*

118 INT. VINCE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 118

Vince masturbates to a drawing he made of Gwen's vagina. Vince features in the drawing as a miniature figure no taller than a nail as he stands before Gwen's labia, saluting them. The phone rings and Vince hesitates slightly.

119 INT. SHEILA'S STAIRWELL. NIGHT. 119

Sheila's message is almost tearful.

SHEILA ON ANSWERPHONE (OFF-SCREEN)

You've reached 01632 960786. I'm not in right now, but if you leave a message, I'll get straight back to you.

POLICE OFFICER (OFF-SCREEN)

Pick up the phone, it's the Police Force. Pick up the phone this instant.

120 INT. CHARITY SHOP. DAY. 120

The dress hangs motionless on a circular rack stuffed with other second hand dresses. A woman is browsing through the shop.

CASHIER

If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask.

CHARITY SHOP CUSTOMER

Thank you.

The customer has her eye on the haunted dress and picks it up, placing it against herself.

CASHIER

Oh, that does look nice on you.

CHARITY SHOP CUSTOMER

Really? A little cold for the winter.

CASHIER

Think about your summer cruise along the Adriatic with the breeze running through that dress whilst you sip your sparkling wine with the captain on deck.

CHARITY SHOP CUSTOMER

It's a long way off.

CASHIER

They're already advertising cruises in the Thames Valley-on-Thames Report.

The cashier yanks the changing room curtain open for the customer.

CHARITY SHOP CUSTOMER

I can't afford a cruise this summer.

The charity shop customer forlornly puts the dress back and takes something less flamboyant with her to the changing room. The cashier yanks it shut as she enters. A man called Clipper enters the store carrying his shopping, which includes a basket of fruit and vegetables. He spots the dress and picks it up.

121 SCENE DELETED 121

122 EXT. OUTSIDE OTHER STORE. NIGHT 122

It's Friday night and a drunk man urinates on top of a dumped Christmas tree left by a store.

A washing machine repairman called Reg Speaks walks past on his way to Amesos Restaurant carrying a plastic bag with a magazine in. One of the windows is shattered. Reg stops to look at the mannequins behind the fractured glass. *

123 INT. CLIPPER'S CAR. NIGHT. 123

As Clipper drives to Amesos Restaurant, the dress slides off the basket in the back seat revealing rotten fruit and vegetables.

124 INT. AMESOS RESTAURANT. NIGHT. 124

Reg Speaks waits at his table. An Italian waiter called Sandro arrives. *

SANDRO *

Welcome to Amesos, dear guest. My name is Sandro. And you are? *

REG *

Reg Speaks. *

SANDRO *

And what's the surname? *

REG *

Speaks. *

SANDRO *

And may I take your lucky order, Reg? *

REG (PUTTING HIS PLASTIC BAG ON THE TABLE) *

Just the kebab will be fine. With chips. *

SANDRO *

Kebab with chips. Instantly. Sorry, not bag on the table. Is not nice. *

Reg instantly obliges and puts the bag on the seat next to him. *

SANDRO (CONT'D) *

And drinks? *

A commotion can be heard outside and Reg turns towards the window as he hears his name being called. Clipper and a gang of four men preparing for Reg's stag night all cheer and make faces at him. Bananas Brian, the father of Reg's fiancée presses his bare buttocks against the window whilst Clipper, Neal the Deal, Skids and Glenjob roar incoherently. *

125

INT. ZINZAN'S NIGHTCLUB. NIGHT.

125

Reg's friends goad him into downing a pint of lager. It's clear that he's suffering, but any sign of resistance is only met with another round of booze.

126 SCENE DELETED

126 *

127 INT. ZINZAN'S NIGHTCLUB. NIGHT.

127

Reg is being forced to down another pint as fast as he can. The boys cheer him on as half the beer goes down his front. He's clearly not enjoying himself. Meanwhile, Clipper gets the dress out.

*
*
*

REG

I'm soaked now.

CLIPPER

Never mind, Reg, never mind. As your best man I come equipped for every eventuality. You need a change of clothing? Look no further.

Clipper dangles the dress in front of Reg, causing uproarious laughter. Reg tries to go along with the teasing.

GLENJOB

I always knew you had a feminine side.

CLIPPER

What choice is there with Babs around?

*
*
*

Everyone laughs. Reg hesitates. The same woman from Sheila and Zach's dance still waits for someone to ask her to dance. What little hope there was in her eyes is fast disappearing.

*

CLIPPER (CONT'D)

Well, don't just look at it. I didn't buy it for the missus, you know.

REG

I can't put it on in here.

BRIAN

Oh yes you can.

REG

It won't fit, anyway.

GLENJOB

Starting to sound like Babs now. No wonder you lot are made for each other.

*
*
*
*

CLIPPER

It'll fit, don't you worry about that.

BRIAN

Come on, you big girl's blouse.

GLENJOB

Yeah, come on Reg, don't let the
side down.

Everyone keeps pestering and jostling until he gives in, causing another yell of excitement.

128 INT. ZINZAN'S NIGHTCLUB TOILET. NIGHT. 128

Reg tries the dress on in a toilet cubicle. A strange electronic drone usurps the nightclub music when Reg puts the dress on for the first time. Even the light in the toilet cubicle takes on a transformative glow.

129 INT. ZINZAN'S NIGHTCLUB. NIGHT. 129

As Reg returns in the dress, his group cheer loudly. Brian puts Reg in a headlock.

GLENJOB

Wait, what happened to the dummy? *

BRIAN *

Clipper?

Clipper puts a baby dummy in Reg's mouth and everyone cheers again. Spirits are poured and Reg is forced to knock back one after another. The boys demand a speech, chanting 'Speech' again and again, only Reg is incapable. Everyone jeers at him and Brian takes over.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Bloody toss pot, I'll do it. Reg's been hanging around my house and more specifically, my daughter's bedroom since he was seventeen. Now we all love Reg. What's not to love about him? He gets the rounds in, good at five-a-side, good at DIY, puts up with my missus and I'll say, he's good around Babs, which is no easy task.

GLENJOB

You can say that again.

BRIAN

You've taken on a spitting cobra there, Reg and knowing that from now on you'll be dealing with her crap from now on instead of me fills me with joy. I owe you one, son. But seriously, we got a good one here. He's solid, our Reg. But if you ever, ever mess with my Babs or philander around with totty, I'll 'ave you. I'll take you straight down, make no mistake. You got that?

CLIPPER

Steady on, bananas.

BRIAN

It's gotta be said. Best to get it
out the way now.

Now come on, son, give us a hug.

Reg Speaks, I salute you!

Everyone cheers.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Here's to Reg and Babs.

EVERYONE

To Reg and Babs!

GLENJOB

And here's to your first divorce!

BRIAN

Oi, less of that!

Everyone laughs apart from Reg.

LATER: Reg is forced onto a spinning 'seat' in the middle of the dancefloor. His friends spin him as fast as they can and then force him to get up and dance. As he drunkenly swerves around, Reg notices a mannequin staring at him from the mezzanine booth. When Reg does a double-take, it turns out to be the disc jockey who never seems to be working the controls. Brian is out of his mind on booze and is by far the loudest, traipsing around the club without his shirt on. Skids tries to dance with a woman, only she tries to politely remain neutral. As Skids starts to push his body against hers, she walks off the dancefloor. Glenjob takes a few photographs of unsuspecting women and Neal the Deal tries in vain to chat a group of women up who clearly can't wait for him to leave them alone. Waiting for the woman who snubbed him to walk past, Skids sticks his foot out and trips her up. Barely hiding his venomous delight, Skids tries to look innocent as the shaken woman picks herself up and looks back at him aghast. Neal the Deal goes into the spinner and then stumbles onto the dancefloor.

130

EXT. OUTSIDE ZINZAN'S. NIGHT.

130

Still in the dress, Reg vomits into a Dentley & Soper's carrier bag, not realising that most of his stomach contents are leaking onto the pavement from a hole in the bag. Most of the group are urinating all over the pavement. Neal the Deal dismantles a bin and throws it across the road. Everyone apart from Reg cheers as rubbish flies out of the bin. Reg is disgusted by the behaviour of his friends, only too polite and drunk to express it.

Ever keen to be remembered as one of the boys, Babs's dad, Brian attempts to outdo everyone by urinating on a parked bicycle, only for his bladder to refuse to cooperate. Brian's stage fright is made all the worse by everyone laughing at him. Brian tries as hard as he can to at least squeeze something out from his penis, but not a drop. In a rage of humiliation, he kicks the spokes of the back wheel until it's unusable. Reg resigns himself to the barbarism around him, as Glenjob puts the dummy back in his mouth. Brian lets out a colossal and sustained roar of drunken, thuggish rage. Dummy in mouth, Reg looks on in horror at his future father-in-law. Clipper runs off with Reg's carrier bag and throws it on the street. Unable to bring himself to vomit on the pavement, Reg collects vomit in his mouth. His cheeks are puffed to the point of bursting. Skids runs up behind Reg and smacks his cheeks with both hands resulting in vomit flying through the air onto Brian. As the men stumble home, a chorus of enraged dogs fills the air.

131 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. DAY.

131

Reg is in bed nursing his hangover, whilst his diminutive but ferocious fiancée, Babs is on the phone. The same rash that Sheila had appears on Reg's lower neck. The canary in the bedroom is in full song.

BABS (OFF-SCREEN)

Yeah, but he doesn't have to roll his eyes at every suggestion I make. It's always this 'I know it better' attitude whenever I deal with Andre. At this rate, I'll get Reg to DJ, assuming he recovers.. It's a chamber of booze and methane in there .. surprised it hasn't killed the canary.. no idea .. he'll stuff it down him and it's always the same .. never puts on any weight. No idea how the jammy bastard does it .. so unfair .. alright, well look, let me know if Andre's willing to be more flexible with the music, otherwise we don't pay; simple as that. Exactly. See you later.

*
*

Babs hangs up and enters the bedroom to lie next to Reg. She finds a spot on his back and tries to squeeze it.

REG

Oi!

BABS

I knew that would wake you.

REG

Ease it on, Babs.

BABS

Good night, then?

Reg is too ill to answer. *

BABS (CONT'D) *

Wish I had a tape of you banging on
about how you weren't going to
drink. *

REG *

It's not the drink. Just a dirty
kebab. *

BABS *

Yeah, right. I don't know why you
hang out with that lot. You knew
what they'd get you into. *

REG *

We didn't do anything. It was just
a dirty kebab. *

BABS *

Dirty kebab, my arse, Reg Speaks.
All you had to do was not accept
the drinks. *

REG *

Didn't want to let the side down.

BABS

You going to lie in bed like that
all day?

Reg ignores Babs and tries to go back to sleep.

BABS (CONT'D)

You know Andre now wants to do a
soundcheck?

REG

What's a soundcheck?

BABS

He wants to test all the gear. Says
it takes three hours.
Cuts right through the wedding.

REG

He's just playing records, isn't
he?

BABS

You talk to him, then. I can't deal with that weasel-mouthed diva anymore. Everytime I question something he just comes back at me claiming he's a perfectionist.

REG

Not now, yeah?

Babs notices a rash on Reg's neck almost identical to Sheila's.

BABS

What's that on your neck?

NB SCENES 132 AND 134 FOLLOW 135

*

135 INT. PAM'S BATHROOM. DAY.

135

Pam stands by Reg as he fixes the machine.

PAM

Who's the lucky fiancée?

REG

How do you know?

PAM

My ex wore that ring. But don't let that put you off.

REG

Her name's Babs. Works at Ambrook's Razors. Dispatch manager.

PAM

Ambrook's? My sister went out with a bloke from Ambrook's. Really nice fella too.

REG

That must be Phil Keeble.

PAM

Why? No one else nice at Ambrook's?

Reg is unable to answer.

PAM (CONT'D)

What's your fiancée like?

REG

Yeah, she's alright.

PAM

How long you been together?

REG

Fourteen, fifteen years? Something like that.

PAM

Why get married now?

REG (CONTEMPLATING)

I don't know .. it's just always been Babs.

PAM

Never been out with anyone else?

REG

No.

PAM

Never tempted?

REG

Not really. It's just Babs.

PAM

You're telling me you never ever get tempted? You don't even look at another woman walking down the street?

Reg begins to feel uncomfortable.

REG

So I can see there's a problem with the wigwag and its rotational pull.

PAM

Small talk time is up, then?

REG

I've got Mrs Beckley up the road at eleven.

PAM

Really? What's your name, young sir?

REG

Reg Speaks.

PAM (BITTER)

My ex-husband used to say he never looked at other women. He's probably selling his new wife the same lie as we speak. What I'd give to know what goes on in the male mind.

REG

Plungers on old machines also tend to stop retracting, which means there's a knock-on effect with the washer.

PAM

You didn't hear what I just said?

REG (OBLIVIOUS)

The inner tub sustained serious dents and the belt drive had come off. Also the inlet valve might've been blocked, but I can't verify that.

(MORE)

REG (OBLIVIOUS) (CONT'D)

It seems the agitator went into overdrive as I saw the pulley had come off. Even with the shock absorber, I can see that significant damage was caused. Usually, the brake shoe on the agitator shaft would limit damage, but there must've been a fault with the helical cap in that case. I'm still yet to look at the belt tensioner in case it wasn't allowing slippage.

Pam falls into a trance as Reg involuntarily veers into his washing machine mantra.

132 INT. STAVERTON'S WASH. DAY. 132

Reg is fixing a washing machine in the workshop, as a colleague approaches.

COLLEAGUE

Oi! Cottrell wants to take you on.

REG

About what?

COLLEAGUE

You didn't invite him to the stag.

REG

But I .. I didn't think it'd be his thing.

*

COLLEAGUE

Well, you tell that to Cottrell.

Reg is filled with dread.

133 INT. COTTRELL'S OFFICE. DAY. 133

Reg enters Cottrell's office looking innocent.

REG

Gary said you wanted to see me?

Cottrell glares at Reg and holds his stare for a small eternity. No words are spoken.

134 SCENE DELETED 134

NB SCENE 135 NOW BEFORE SCENE 132

136 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

136

Reg makes love to Babs, whilst she moans about her wedding guests.

BABS
Why'd you invite Chris Dale to the wedding?

REG
Not now.

BABS
In other words, yet another pointless guest of yours.

REG
He taught me judo.

BABS
Yeah, when you were seventeen and even then you legged it when Roj Lines wanted your dinner money.

Reg tries to forget the conversation and gets on with lovemaking.

BABS (CONT'D)
Half of the people on that list never bothered to invite us to their weddings. And you can definitely drop Greg and Tina.

REG
Why?

BABS
'Cos they invited themselves.

Reg ignores Babs again.

BABS (CONT'D)
Other thing with them is that opens the door to Dave and Sarah, Justin and Linda, Nick and Charlie and Adrian and Russ. Invite Greg and Tina and we automatically have to invite those jokers as well. Nip it in the bud.

Reg chooses not to argue.

BABS (CONT'D)
Are you listening?

REG (DESPERATE)
Yes!

Reg carries on hopelessly thrusting.

137 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 137

The dress hangs above Reg and Babs as they sleep. Reg wakes up briefly thinking he can see his fleece hanging above him, but goes back to sleep when he realises there's nothing there. *

138 INT. BABS & REG'S KITCHEN. DAY. 138

A radio report on the sales plays in the background as Reg tries to slice a particularly hard butternut squash with a kitchen knife. Reg struggles with the knife as it only partially slices through. Even taking it out again is an effort. Reg forces the knife through with all his might, only for it to slip. It narrowly misses his hand.

BABS (OFF-SCREEN)
Reg! Reg! Reg Speaks! *

REG
What?

No answer.

139 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. DAY. 139 *

Babs tries Reg's dress on. The strange dress music plays over the scene as Babs looks at herself in the mirror. Babs feels elated that she can fit into a size thirty-six.

140 INT. BABS & REG'S KITCHEN. DAY. 140

Reg is hollowing out the butternut squash and Babs enters..

BABS
Look.

Reg looks perplexed.

BABS (CONT'D)
What do you think?

REG
Yeah, it's alright.

BABS
Wash out the stink and it could be alright on me. You like me in it?

REG
Yeah. Maybe try it with some tights?

BABS

Why?

REG

I don't know .. a bit nippy out there.

BABS

Told you a million times they make my legs itch. You don't need anything else with this. It's fine by itself. Look.

Babs does a spin.

BABS (USED TO REG'S LEVEL OF NON-EXCITEMENT) (CONT'D)

Where did Clipper get it from?

REG

Some shop or other .. I don't know.

BABS

It's a size thirty-six.

Reg drifts back into cooking mode.

BABS (CONT'D)

How comes you fit into it?

REG (ANSWERING WITHOUT LISTENING)

Yeah.

BABS

You listening?

REG

I like it, yeah.

BABS (ANGRY)

You don't get it, do you? How come you fit into a size thirty-six?

140B	INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S WINDOW DISPLAY. NIGHT.	140B	*
	The streets are empty and the camera slowly zooms into the display vortex revealing...		* *
140C	SCENE DELETED	140C	*
141	INT. BABS & REG'S KITCHEN. DAY.	141	*
	Babs loads the washing machine with dirty laundry including the cursed dress.		* *
	REG		*
	Not the fleece!		*

Babs elbows Reg away.

*

BABS

*

It stinks. Wear the other one.

*

142

INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' FASHION BOUTIQUE. DAY.

142

Reg sits on a bench designated for bored husbands and reads a car magazine whilst Babs tries a dress on. A man next to Craig reads an identical magazine. Mr Lundy can be heard talking to a customer in the background.

*

*

MR LUNDY

Like a whisper in an ocean, like a feather in a storm ..

Babs suddenly walks out of the changing room to show Reg the new dress.

BABS
See look, it's a thirty-eight and
it's tight.

REG
Get a size up, then.

BABS
So you think it's tight?

REG
I thought that's what you just
said?

BABS (STORMING BACK INTO THE CHANGING
ROOM)
Useless.

Reg seems used to Babs's temper and continues to read his car magazine.

143 INT. BABS & REG'S KITCHEN. DAY. 143 *

The dress is spinning in the washing machine and the whole thing gains a sinister momentum.

144 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S CHANGING ROOM. DAY. 144

As Babs struggles to take off the size thirty-eight dress, she notices the rash on her chest.

145 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAY. 145

Miss Luckmore is at the counter glancing at Reg through the corner of her eye. A commotion can be heard in the Ladies' department. Reg tries to find out what all the shouting is about. Mr Lundy is laid out on the floor and has a middle-aged shoplifter's head clasped between his thighs in a leg lock. Both of them are grimacing and growling. A crowd gather round and Miss Luckmore tries to help.

MR LUNDY (TO THE SHOPLIFTER)
Villainy! And now the horrid
repercussions will abate your rank
.. Madam!

Miss Luckmore opens the shoplifter's handbag and takes out a pair of French knickers that she stole.

145B INT. BABS & REG'S KITCHEN. DAY. 145B *

The washing machine starts to lose control.

145C EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S WINDOW. NIGHT. 145C

Babs and Reg walk past the window display.

BABS

Over forty-five minutes they had me on hold and then the line goes dead. That's my whole lunch break gone.

REG

You could've had your sandwiches while you were on hold.

Reg stops at the window display, entranced by a mannequin wearing silk stockings.

BABS

How am I supposed to eat if I'm all wound up like that? I should never have gone for that store card. All that bloody hassle for a stupid, free umbrella, which you ended up losing. Even when I went in there to cancel it the woman kept me waiting half an hour, no apology, nothing .. Reg? .. Reg? .. you listening?

Reg lapses into a brief flashback from when he was a boy at a department store.

145D INT. DEPARTMENT STORE. DAY. 145D

A woman kneels before the young Reg to see if a fleece fits him. His mother stands by him. The young Reg is bewitched by the woman's legs in the same stockings as in the window display. *

STORE ASSISTANT

Now let me just try this on you, see if it fits.

The woman tries the zip on the fleece. *

STORE ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

There, that should keep your head above water.

YOUNG REG

Thank you.

STORE ASSISTANT (TO REG'S MOTHER)
He's very patient, isn't he? Not
like most of the boys we get in
here.

(to Reg)

What's your name, young sir?

YOUNG REG
Reg Speaks.

145E EXT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT.

145E

Babs tries to snap Reg out of his trance.

BABS
Reg! Reg! Reginald! Get a move on
or we'll miss the badminton.

146 INT. BABS & REG'S LOUNGE. NIGHT.

146

Reg and Babs enter.

BABS
You need to ask Clipper where he
got it from. Knowing him it's some
second hand shop.

REG
What's that got to do with it?

BABS
Think about it! We've both got the
same rash. We both wore the dress.
You never heard of scabies?

Babs notices the flooded lounge.

*

BABS (LOOKING UP) (CONT'D)
Reg?

Reg is shocked to find the kitchen utterly damaged by the
washing machine. All the sodden clothes lie on the kitchen
floor amidst the red water. Reg immediately retrieves his
ruined fleece, (identical to the one he's wearing) and is on
the verge of tears.

*
*
*
*
*

147 SCENE DELETED

147

*

148 EXT. BABS & REG'S GARDEN. NIGHT.

148

The dress hangs from a washing line in the garden. It blows about as if there were a strong wind, but there's not even a breeze. A couple of other items including the fleece hang on the line from a previous wash yet they're perfectly still. *

149 INT. BABS & REG'S KITCHEN. NIGHT. 149 *

Babs tries to scrub off a stain as Reg fixes the machine.

BABS

You think we need a new one?

REG

Hopefully not. We'll see.

BABS

What was wrong with it?

REG (REPEATING HIS MANTRA)

Probably a problem with the wigwag and its rotational pull. Plungers on old machines also tend to stop retracting, which means there's a knock-on effect with the washer. The inner tub sustained serious dents and the belt drive had come off.

Babs has had enough and retires to the bedroom. Reg turns to the mirror and continues his washing machine monologue.

REG (CONT'D)

Also the inlet valve might've been blocked, but I can't verify that. It seems the agitator went into overdrive as I noticed the pulley had come off.

A SLOW ZOOM-IN enters the cylinder of the washing machine.

150 EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT. 150

The dress still sways violently on the washing line.

151 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 151

Reg and Babs are sleeping. The squeaky sound of the dress swinging on the line wakes Reg and he goes to the window. The dress hangs perfectly still. Something that looks like a mannequin is hiding in the bushes. Reg puts his glasses on and the apparition disappears.

152 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. DAY. 152

Reg is asleep whilst Babs is showering. The phone rings.

BABS (OFF-SCREEN)

Reg! Reg! Reginald!

Reg gets up to answer.

153 INT. BABS & REG'S HALLWAY. DAY. 153

As Reg walks towards the phone, Babs still shouts from the bathroom.

BABS (OFF-SCREEN)

Reg!

REG

I'm getting it!

(picking up the phone)

01632 960597?

ROGER, THE NEIGHBOUR (OFF-SCREEN)

Reg, it's Roger. Sorry to get you up, but something from your washing line blew into our garden.

154 INT. STAVERTON'S WASH. EVENING. 154

Reg is dismantling a washing machine as a colleague approaches.

COLLEAGUE

Oi! Cottrell's looking for you.

REG

What now?

COLLEAGUE

One of your neighbours reported you.

Reg goes stone-cold.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

Tell me you didn't do it.

REG

I had to do it. It was an emergency.

COLLEAGUE

You know the rules, Reg. You fix your own machine, it still has to go through the books.

REG

But I bought my own spare parts.

COLLEAGUE

And? Who paid for your training? You really let the side down, you know that? Now go in there before Cottrell takes me on as well.

Reg looks terrified.

155 INT. COTTRELL'S OFFICE. EVENING. 155

Reg enters to find Cottrell glaring at him again. No words are spoken as Cottrell stares at Reg with absolute fury. There's no escape from the raging stare that every employee fears.

156 SCENE DELETED 156 *

157 INT. REG'S CAR. NIGHT. 157

As Reg drives home in disgrace, he notices the Dentley & Soper's building in a wheat field. As he does a double take in the rear view mirror, another car blows its horn with the headlights dazzling. He has to suddenly swerve out the way and brake. The shock of it causes a mild panic attack. The driver of the other car gets out to confront Reg.

DRIVER (OFF-SCREEN IN A CRESCENDO)
Idiot! Idiot! Idiot!

Reg races off to avoid a confrontation.

158 INT. BABS & REG'S LOUNGE. EVENING. 158

A radio report on the sales plays in the background as Reg and his future father-in-law, Bananas Brian take down the Christmas decorations. A photo of Brian looking radiant with Babs is on the mantelpiece. A newspaper featuring news of Sheila's death is used as wrapping for the baubles. A crumpled photograph of an absolutely devastated Vince crying on his father's shoulder is taken at random and scrunched up to protect the baubles until the following Christmas. Reg is caught up in a knot of Christmas lights, which are still plugged in. The dress has somehow made its way on top of the plugs. The extension lead is tugging and sparking slightly as Reg unravels more lighting. The placid Brian is utterly different from the monstrous drunk he was on the stag night. Babs enters yanking her tights off; an action never lost on Reg. Babs scratches her legs, relieved to be free of her tights. *

BABS
I've had it with Andre. If he vetoes one more song I'm gonna make pâté from his miserable bastard balls.

BRIAN
Where'd you learn to talk like that? *

BABS
Easy for you to say, you're not the one dealing with him. *

(MORE) *

BABS (CONT'D)

Every time I say no to something,
he just says 'why?' 'why?' 'why?'

*
*
*

REG

How about I make a compilation tape? Could save us a bit of money too.

BABS

You're joking, right? Your record collection wouldn't even get a flea jumping.

REG

Ease it on, Babs, I'm just trying to help.

Reg doesn't realise how far he's stretching the lights as they tug more and more against the power supply, which the dress is over. Babs joins in with the cleaning and notices Craig packing the Christmas candles.

*
*

BABS

What you doing? They stay on the table.

*
*

BRIAN

Why?

*

Babs looks as if she's about to kill Brian, only to realise he's joking. As Brian laughs, Babs pretends to strangle him, which ends up as a playful hug. Babs reaches under the dress to loosen the lead and miraculously nothing happens.

*
*
*

BABS

Now come in the kitchen. I bought a cheesecake for you both.

159 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

159

Babs tries to squeeze one of the spots on Reg's chest whilst he's reading a car magazine. He instantly moves into a defensive position, glaring at Babs.

BABS (REFERRING TO THE RASH)

You're not worried?

REG

Probably just the washing powder we use.

BABS

You don't think it's scabies?

REG

No.

BABS

An allergy?

REG
No.

BABS
Something venereal?

REG
You tell me.

BABS
I haven't slept around.

REG
Me neither.

BABS
Does that mean you love me, then?

REG (STILL READING HIS CAR MAGAZINE)
Yeah.

A glow of warmth comes over Babs and she rests her head against Reg's chest.

160 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 160

Reg and Babs sleep entwined in each other. The dress hangs in the air above the canary cage and falls on top of it. Inside, the bird can be heard fluttering frantically.

161 INT. BABS & REG'S BEDROOM. MORNING. 161

Babs and Reg study the dead canary, which has lost a lot of its plumage revealing a rash underneath.

BABS
You asphyxiated it!

REG
How can a dress asphyxiate it?

BABS
Well, how else did it die? It's barely a year old.

REG
What if it's carbon monoxide?

BABS
We'd be dead, then.

REG
Not if it's a small leak.

BABS
You're scaring me now.

REG
I'll come back and take a look
during my lunchbreak.

Reg puts his uniform on knowing he has no job to go to. Babs also puts on her outfit for work minus the tights, which always frustrates Reg.

BABS
No way you can get home and back in
an hour. Go off to work, I'll look
at it during lunch.

REG
What if you ..

BABS (INTERRUPTING)
Think I don't know how to fix
things?

REG
If the flame turns orange, call me.

BABS
Yeah, yeah.

Babs checks her hair in the mirror, whilst Reg loiters around in the hope of her putting her tights on.

BABS (CONT'D)
What you doing?

REG
You're going to be late.

BABS
Five minutes is not going to kill
anyone.
Go, before Cottrell shoves a
firework up your backside!

REG
Don't forget your tights.

BABS
Reg go, I need to sort my hair!

162 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK - OFFICE. DAY.

162

Still wearing his Staverton's Wash uniform, Reg sits before Stash and Clive.

CLIVE

Thanks for coming in, Reg. When our neighbour heard you were coming in for a loan, he wanted to pass on his greetings.

REG

Who's that?

CLIVE

Mr Watlington, your Physics teacher.

REG

Oh right.

STASH

He also wanted to pass on his apologies for hitting you.

REG (WANTING TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT)

It's OK.

CLIVE

It was a bit of a Reg Speaks evening, in fact. He kept telling us stories about you at school and to tell you the truth, he was sad to hear about your finances when we showed him your loan application.

STASH

Now with that in mind, of course we'd love to consider your thoughtful request, but given that Staverton's kicked you out, we're somewhat reluctant to sign it off.

CLIVE

If we had some guarantee, whether that be upcoming employment or someone who can make the repayments for you if you fall behind, .. but as it stands, we don't see any evidence of either.

REG

What about here? I heard there was a job going.

CLIVE

Sorry, already taken. But I saw a sign at Dentley & Soper's saying they were looking for someone in the Male Alliance of Clothing and Costume.

STASH

No, no, but looking in the sense that one of the staff disappeared. They're just trying to find him. They're not advertising a job.

CLIVE

Oh .. silly me, my mistake.

REG

What about a smaller loan? Just something to tie me over?

Clive and Stash look at each other.

163 INT. BABS & REG'S BATHROOM. DAY. 163

Babs inspects the boiler and uses the cursed dress to wipe off the dusty lid.

164 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK - OFFICE. DAY. 164

STASH

Now, the only loan we can offer is our Deferred Employment Package.

CLIVE (LOOKING PLEASED WITH HIMSELF AT THE ACRONYM)

DEP.

STASH

It's what we call a motivational loan.

CLIVE

And it really helps our customers get back on their feet, back in the job market.

REG

In what way?

STASH

All sorts, really.

CLIVE

DEP is like a game. It comes with its bonuses, but we also like to throw in forfeits, which keeps clients excited and engaged.

REG

What kind of forfeits?

STASH

Well .. corrective tributes.

Reg doesn't have a clue what that means.

CLIVE

Fines .. but only if you don't keep up with repayments.

REG (READING THE MATERIAL)

But with that kind of interest rate?

CLIVE

That's just advisory.

STASH

Reg, Clive and I couldn't help noticing that you worked at Staverton's Wash. Now we had one of their repairmen round a few years ago and we still think a lot about how nicely he talked us through the whole process of fixing our machine.

CLIVE

And we thought since we'll be having Reg Speaks in the room, maybe he can do something like that for us. Just a few words about what is wrong and how it's going to be fixed.

STASH

It would mean a lot to us, Reg.

REG

But there's no machine here.

STASH

Just pretend there's one.

CLIVE

Nobody has to know.

REG

But I can't just ..

STASH

Just try. We can look at more favourable rates for you.

Reg tries his best.

REG

Plungers on old machines also tend to stop retracting, which means there's a knock-on effect with the washer. The inner tub sustained serious dents and the belt drive had come off.

Clive and Stash start to go cross-eyed as they enter their trance.

REG (CONT'D)

Also the inlet valve might've been blocked, but I can't verify that. It seems the agitator went into overdrive as I noticed the pulley ..

165 SCENE DELETED 165

166 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK - OFFICE. DAY. 166

Looking genuinely distraught, Reg is stuttering and unable to speak.

STASH

It's OK, Reg. It's OK. Nobody's forcing you.

Reg continues his washing machine mantra, only finds himself caught up in his own stutter and unable to break past the locked gate of the 'p' in pulley.. *

CLIVE

If it helps, we could kick it off in a roleplay scenario. *

Reg hesitates.

STASH (REFERRING TO THE COSTUME RAIL)

A lot of loan applicants find our Tudor Courtroom scenario puts them at ease.

CLIVE

Clothes still needed washing then.

Reg starts to tremble slightly.

STASH

What's the matter, Reg? You spoke so nicely and easily when you first came in.

REG

Nothing. I'm just a little tender these days, that's all.

STASH

How come?

REG

Just this sleepingdream I had last night. Going through my mind all day. Babs, my fiancée, was in labour. I was late and by that point, the door was locked.

167 INT. OPERATING THEATRE. DAY. (DREAM) 167

Babs is in labour with a team of medics, (the staff from Dentley & Soper's) and the midwife, (Miss Luckmore in a sinister mask) around her. Reg has to make do with staring through a glass panel in the door.

168 INT. WAINGEL'S OFFICE. DAY. 168

STASH

Then what happened?

REG

I tried to take on her pain. Just to make her feel better. Only the baby washed her hands of me.

169 INT. OPERATING THEATRE. DAY. (DREAM) 169

Reg appears behind the door window and watches Babs in labour. The team of nurses try their best to help a screaming Babs. Her pains grow in intensity until she almost faints. Reg also screams from behind the thick pane of glass, but can't be heard. For a moment, he thinks he can see the Dentley & Soper's mannequin next to the midwife. Babs's screams envelop the whole room and Reg has his mouth wide open screaming back out of sympathy, even though nothing can be heard from him behind the thick pane of glass. Babs has her stomach cut open and the midwife pulls out the baby already dressed in a mini version of the cursed dress.

- 170 INT. WAINGEL'S OFFICE. DAY. 170
- STASH
What was her name?
- REG
Babs Junior.
- 171 INT. OPERATING THEATRE. DAY. (DREAM) 171
- The midwife holds Babs Junior up in front of Reg who is still behind the window. The baby glaring with opaque eyes nonchalantly gives her father the finger, which makes Reg scream again. Meanwhile, Babs is hosed down by Mr Lundy disguised as a doctor. The blood empties into a drain next to the bed. The doctor takes a look at Reg behind the window and suddenly squirts it with the hose in the hope that he'll clear off. *
- 172 INT. WAINGEL'S BANK - OFFICE. DAY. 172
- Clive and Stash digest what they've just heard and an awkward silence ensues.
- CLIVE
Interesting .. reminds me of a dream Stash and I had about the sand dunes.
- STASH
Oh yeah, that.
- 173 INT. BABS & REG'S LOUNGE. DAY. 173
- Reg returns home feeling despondent. He quickly checks the boiler and then throws himself onto the couch to watch TV.
- 174 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. DAY. 174
- Miss Luckmore puts up a sign announcing the last day of the sales and then joins her colleagues for the greeting freeze as the doors are about to open.
- 175 PHOTO MONTAGE. 175
- A local radio report focuses on the last day of the sales. Photographs show shoppers browsing and buying, whilst locals are interviewed on the radio.
- 176 SCENE DELETED 176 *

*

177 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. EVENING.

177

As Babs browses in the Boutique, Miss Luckmore notices the dress on her and becomes nervous. She fetches Mr Lundy and the two whisper with great intent. Babs begins to notice that she's being looked at and returns the stare. Miss Luckmore approaches.

MISS LUCKMORE

Imagine, trading will cease at a premature hour on this, the twelfth day of the sales. There lie other boutiques on the street to your discernment.

BABS

But I'm in the store now. You can't just turf me out. Customer rules and all that.

MISS LUCKMORE

You must conclude your perusal immediately, then.

BABS

Excuse me, I've worked in retail. Once the customer steps through the door, see it through 'till the last. That's what I had to do.

Mr Lundy nervously stands nearby, wondering what will be the outcome.

MISS LUCKMORE

The doors you passed through are doors in perpetual revolve and thus not a veritable indication of the time in which you thought you might have set heel in Dentley & Soper's Trusted Department Store, mate.

*

BABS

You call those doors revolving? Listen, I'm here to choose a dress, yeah? Pick something up, try it on, pay for it and then leave you in peace. By the time you've thought of another excuse to get me out, I'll be done, mate!.

*

MISS LUCKMORE (PICKING AT THE DRESS)

This dress. So shabby. So unkempt.
We have rules here about
presentation, about hygiene, about
conduct. A required pedigree of
shopping is an aspiration we
flowerfully seal to our hearts.
Please return in a different dress
and we will welcome you back.

BABS

If you let me buy a new dress, I
will.

Feeling a stalemate, Miss Luckmore turns to Mr Lundy who
summons her over and whispers in her ear at length. Miss
Luckmore returns to Babs a changed person.

MISS LUCKMORE

I now announce you extension time.
Congratulations!

BABS (CONFUSED TO THE POINT OF
IRRITATION)

I never thought I'd say this, but
you lot could all do with a good
shag.

Miss Luckmore politely laughs off the insult, as does Mr
Lundy. Babs goes about her shopping with Miss Luckmore and Mr
Lundy still chuckling to themselves separately in the
background.

177B INT. BOILER. EVENING.

177B

The pilot light on the boiler turns orange; a sign that
carbon monoxide is leaking.

178 INT. BABS & REG'S LOUNGE. EVENING.

178

Reg is transfixed by the Dentley & Soper's advert and starts
to feel drowsy. The advert starts to shapeshift and flicker,
opening up into a portal where Sheila's dream comes alive
again and the mannequins on display are Jill, Sheila, Reg and
Babs.

179 INT. BABS & REG'S BATHROOM. EVENING.

179

Carbon monoxide continues to leak from the boiler.

180 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. EVENING.

180

Babs has found a dress to try on, only the changing rooms are occupied. To kill the time, she browses through the Dentley & Soper's catalogue noticing the torn-out page.

MISS LUCKMORE (CLOSING THE CATALOGUE)

Such an intimate document of
finesse and joy.

BABS

Nice to see a catalogue with ladies
bigger than me for once.

MISS LUCKMORE

In whispers from the canary to the
owl. Pray tell, your measurement
would be?

*

BABS

Guess.

MISS LUCKMORE

Thirty-six?

Babs's eyes suddenly light up.

BABS

Really?

MISS LUCKMORE

Thirty-six.

BABS

You're not just saying that?

MISS LUCKMORE

Thirty-six.

BABS

Thirty-six. I had a dream that I
was a size thirty-six and I went
out with my friends to ZinZan's to
celebrate, but it wasn't ZinZan's.
It's all coming back now.

MISS LUCKMORE

One must reflect upon the quotidian
crux of this sales period and
distinguish between the constructs
of the real and illusory.

BABS

It was here. That's where I was. In
this room and in this catalogue;

(MORE)

BABS (CONT'D)

every image was me in this dress,
getting skinnier and skinnier, but
the measurements written next to me
claimed I was getting bigger and
bigger.

Miss Luckmore joins in with the recounting of the dream

*

BABS AND MISS LUCKMORE (UNISON)

*

I rang the staff bell for
assistance. Two ladies came to my
aid and told me to put my head
between my knees whilst they tried
to correct the catalogue.

Babs recounts the dream with such sadness, genuinely confused
by how she perceives her size.

181 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S BACKROOM. NIGHT. (DREAM) 181

Two members of staff cut Babs out from each page of the
catalogue and either fold her or cut her into smaller pieces.
The two women start whispering numbers to each other as they
continue going through the pages. All the dismembered cut-
outs of Babs are placed in a coffin until it becomes full of
paper. Hundreds of different images of Babs's smiling face
appear cut-out amongst all the paper along with cut-outs of
her legs, arms and so on.

182 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. NIGHT. (DREAM) 182

BABS (OFF-SCREEN)

*

And then they buried me.

The coffin is carried into the centre of the Ladies' Boutique
and lowered into a hole in the floor. All the members of
staff bow as the coffin disappears.

183 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. EVENING. 183

BABS

*

And then they buried me.

MISS LUCKMORE (CHANGING THE SUBJECT
AFTER A YAWN)

The changing room is ready for you
and your dress to coalesce into a
simple union of wonder.

184 INT. CHANGING ROOM. EVENING. 184

As Babs gets changed, she throws her cursed dress on the
floor, not noticing it as it slowly moves away.

185 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. EVENING. 185

Miss Luckmore and a customer (Audrey) wait for the money
chute to return.

*

Meanwhile, a woman (Jocelyn) looks at some bras that are on a special discount tray next to the counter. Jocelyn is so engrossed in the bras that she genuinely doesn't notice the other customer (Elaine) already in the queue by the counter. Elaine, who is standing behind Audrey gives Jocelyn the benefit of the doubt as she lurks near the front of the queue looking at bras. *

186 INT. OUTSIDE CHANGING ROOM. EVENING. 186

A passing customer notices the dress on the floor and hangs it on a rail, unaware that an electric heater lies directly beneath.

187 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' FASHION BOUTIQUE. EVENING. 187

The money returns from the chute and Miss Luckmore gives the woman her change.

AUDREY *

Thank you very much, goodbye.

MISS LUCKMORE

Goodbye to you too, dear Audrey.

Miss Luckmore indicates that she's ready for the next customer and Jocelyn gets in first, unaware that she jumped the queue. Elaine who was already in line quickly asserts herself and pushes back in. *

ELAINE (TO MISS LUCKMORE) *

There will be this asphodel blouse and a pair of those funeral stockings just behind you.

MISS LUCKMORE

Instantly.

JOCELYN *

Excuse me, I was here first.

ELAINE *

No you weren't. Going through that tray doesn't give you a right to bypass the queue.

JOCELYN *

You came here after me.

ELAINE *

No I didn't. Now if you don't mind

..

Elaine places her dress on the counter for Miss Luckmore and Jocelyn backs off. *

MISS LUCKMORE

Such a fascinating item of marvel.
Its touch to the skin, its contour
on the body.

Jocelyn can't deal with losing face and decides to confront
Elaine again by slamming her bra on the counter. *

JOCELYN *

I will be served first! There'll be
this cinnamon bra, thank you very
much.

A moment of shock for everyone as Miss Luckmore works out how
to respond.

MISS LUCKMORE

I have a coin that will spin and
decide.

ELAINE *

Don't be ridiculous, she pushed in,
you saw her.

JOCELYN *

I was at this tray and you shove in
with that ghastly dress of yours.
So if you don't mind, wait your
turn!

A friend of Jocelyn calls over from one of the dress racks. *

FRIEND OF JOCELYN (TO JOCELYN) *

You alright there, Jocelyn? *

JOCELYN *

Yeah, just some idiot woman who
doesn't know how to queue.

Elaine grabs the bra and throws it on the floor. Jocelyn
spits at Elaine who then slaps her back. Suddenly, a fight
erupts with Jocelyn's friend quickly joining in. Elaine's
friend rushes to her defence as well and the four women fall
about the store, punching, scratching and shoving. Miss
Luckmore screams for calm. *

MISS LUCKMORE *

Blame! .. Blame! *

Miss Luckmore rushes in to break up the fight and pushes
Elaine away who falls back onto another customer who
spontaneously reacts by fighting. The fight begins to spread
and one woman falls back onto a cabinet. The smashed cabinet
ignites a sudden urge to steal a mystery pair of long, red
leather gloves. As the woman steals them, she unwittingly
inspires an urgent eruption of looting. *

*

188 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S OUTSIDE CHANGING ROOM. EVENING. 188

The dress falls off the rail onto the electric heater and catches fire.

189 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S BOUTIQUE. EVENING. 189

The fight quickly escalates into a riot as other ladies join in. Those who aren't directly involved in the fight start smashing up the store. Two ladies take a mannequin and use it as a battering ram to smash the glass of the cabinets on the counter. Endless items are pilfered amidst the chaos. *

- 190 INT. BABS & REG'S LOUNGE. EVENING. 190
Reg is dead.
- 191 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. EVENING 191 *
The store is full of middle-aged ladies fighting, smashing *
the place up or looting. As one lady tries to steal a black, *
high-heeled leather boot, she's rugby tackled by two others *
and smothered in shoe polish until her face turns black. *
Another woman is strangled by a suspender belt in the *
lingerie section as she tries her luck stealing a girdle. The *
shop staff (apart from Mr Lundy) are caught up in the *
fighting and Miss Luckmore is lynched. *
- 192 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S OUTSIDE CHANGING ROOM. EVENING. 192
The fire spreads from the dress to the curtain and very
quickly, the store is going up in flames.
- 193 INT. CHANGING ROOM. EVENING. 193
Babs can't open the changing room door and bangs and screams
as the room fills with smoke.
- 194 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. EVENING. 194
The mayhem continues as the store becomes engulfed in flames. *
A bald, scratched and bruised Miss Luckmore manages to flee *
and quickly grabs Reading the mannequin. *
- 195 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S BACKROOM. EVENING. 195
Miss Luckmore rushes to the chute and climbs in with the *
torso of Reading. *
- 196 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S LADIES' BOUTIQUE. EVENING. 196
The rioting customers manage to run out of the store as it
burns down. The mannequins melt into a pure vision of horror.
- 197 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S CHUTE. EVENING. 197

As the chute descends, Miss Luckmore can see in each floor a *
 'sweatshop' room housing a lone worker. In the first floor *
 she passes, Jill can be seen frantically working at a sewing *
 machine with red thread coming out of her arms. The following *
 floors reveal Sheila, Craig and Babs similarly sewing with *
 red thread from their arms. The floors below reveal empty *
 work stations with the sewing machines running, waiting for *
 the dress's next victims. The chute picks up speed as it *
 passes sweatshop after sweatshop until they become flickers. *
 As the chute infinitely descends, the alternate light and *
 darkness of the sweatshops and in between floors flicker on *
 the faces of Miss Luckmore and Reading, the mannequin. *

198 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S SHOP WINDOW. EVENING. 198 *
 One last venture into the burning vortex. *

198B SCENE DELETED 198B *

199 INT. DENTLEY & SOPER'S. NIGHT. 199 *
 Firemen go through the damage. Everything has been burnt to
 shreds apart from the dress. A fireman walks over to the
 chute and shines his torch down the shaft.

FIREMAN
 Anyone there? .. Hello?

199B INT. BALE PLANT. DAY. 199B *
 The dress is processed in a bale of unwanted clothing. *

199C INT. LOADING BAY. DAY. 199C *
 From inside a loading container, a man pushes the bale of *
 clothing inside and closes the door. *

200 EXT. DOVER. DAY. 200 *
 The metal container is loaded onto a boat and it sets sail *
 for the continent disappearing into the fog. *
 *
 *

THE END